

Quodvultdeus: A Bishop Forming Christians in Vandal Africa

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TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LANGUAGE

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Quodvultdeus: A Bishop Forming Christians in Vandal Africa

*A Contextual Analysis of
the Pre-baptismal Sermons attributed to
Quodvultdeus of Carthage*

By

David Vopřada



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Contents

Acknowledgements IX

Abbreviations X

Introduction 1

PART 1

Africa, the Vandals, and Quodvultdeus

Introduction to Part 1 11

1 North Africa, Carthage, and Its Religion 13

1 Roman Africa 13

1.1 *The City of Carthage* 16

1.2 *The Religion of Africa* 19

1.3 *African Christianity* 21

2 The Barbarian Invasions 28

2.1 *The Origin of the Vandals* 31

2.2 *The Invasion of Africa* 34

2.3 *Carthage Captured* 38

2.4 *Vandal Residence in Africa* 40

3 The Catholics in the Vandal Kingdom 44

3.1 *Vandal Christianity* 49

3.2 *Geiseric's Persecution of the Catholic Church* 51

2 Quodvultdeus and His Work 57

1 Life of a Deacon and a Bishop 57

1.1 *A Deacon in Carthage* 58

1.2 *Quodvultdeus's Correspondence with Augustine* 61

1.3 *The Bishop of Carthage* 62

1.4 *Exile in Campania, Quodvultdeus's Death and His Cult* 65

2 Quodvultdeus's Work 66

2.1 *Authenticity of Quodvultdeus's Works* 67

2.2 *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei* 77

2.3 *De quattuor virtutibus caritatis* 79

2.4 *Adversus quinque haereses* 82

2.5 *De tempore barbarico I* 85

- 2.6 De tempore barbarico II 87
- 2.7 Dubia 89
- 2.8 *Prebaptismal and Baptismal Catecheses* 90
- 3 The African Tradition of Preparation for Baptism 92
 - 1 Education Related to Baptism in Antiquity 93
 - 2 Augustine's Catechumenate 101
 - 3 The African Catechumenate according to Augustine's Works 106
 - 3.1 *The Initial Catechesis and Entrance into the Catechumenate* 106
 - 3.2 *The First Part of the Catechumenate: The Hearers* 110
 - 3.3 *Giving a Name for Baptism* 114
 - 3.4 *Scrutinies and Exorcisms* 118
 - 3.5 *Handing over the Creed* 121
 - 3.6 *Handing over the Lord's Prayer* 124
 - 3.7 *The Baptismal Rites* 126

PART 2

Quodvultdeus's Catechetical Programme

- 4 Catechumenate and Giving the Name for Baptism 133
 - 1 The Catechumenate and Its Entrance Rite 134
 - 2 Inspiring the *Competentes* 136
 - 2.1 De cantico novo 137
- 5 Renunciation of the Devil and Adhesion to the Faith 150
 - 1 Scrutiny and Handing over of the Creed 152
 - 1.1 *The Scrutiny: Rooting out the Devil* 155
 - 1.2 *Receiving the Creed* 164
 - 2 *De symbolo* I 168
 - 3 *De symbolo* II 174
 - 4 *De symbolo* III 181
 - 5 *De accedentibus ad gratiam* I 186
 - 6 *De accedentibus ad gratiam* II 195
 - 7 *Contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arrianos* 200
- 6 Quodvultdeus's Baptismal Theology 211
 - 1 *De ultima quarta feria* 212
 - 2 *De cataclysmo* 216

PART 3

*Quodvultdeus's Catechetical Ministry in the Unpleasant Times***Introduction to Part 3** 223**7 Building the Community** 224

- 1 Building Baptismal Identity and the Mother Church 224
- 2 Typology and Mystagogy 230
 - 2.1 *Mystagogy* 230
 - 2.2 *Biblical and Liturgical Typology* 232
 - 2.3 *Liturgy and Mystagogy* 235
- 3 Mystagogy of the Scrutiny and the *traditio symboli* 236
- 4 Exodus Typology of Baptism and Eucharist 240
 - 4.1 *Crossing of the Red Sea* 241
 - 4.2 *The Passover Lamb* 243
 - 4.3 *Christ the New Moses and the Stairs of the Cross* 246
- 5 The Mystagogy on the Power of Christ's Blood 248
- 6 Non-typological Sacramental Catechesis 255

8 Defending the Church 257

- 1 The Devil and His Pimps 261
- 2 The Church Facing Various Religious Groups 265
- 3 Polemical Language of Quodvultdeus's Sermons 267
 - 3.1 *Manichaeans* 275
 - 3.2 *Schismatics* 278
 - 3.3 *Pelagians* 279
 - 3.4 *Sabellians* 281
 - 3.5 *Arians* 282
 - 3.6 *Jews* 290
 - 3.7 *Pagans* 296
- 4 Return to the Catholic Church 299

Conclusion 303**Bibliography** 309**Biblical Index** 336**Index of Ancient Sources** 339**Index of Names and Places** 359**Index of Modern Authors** 364

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Abbreviations

Works attributed to Quodvultdeus

AI–2	<i>De accedentibus ad gratiam</i> I–II
AQH	<i>Adversus quinquae haereses</i>
CN	<i>De cantico novo</i>
C	<i>De cataclysmo</i>
CIPA	<i>Contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arrianos</i>
L	<i>Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei</i>
QVC	<i>De quattuor virtutibus caritatis</i>
S1–3	<i>De symbolo</i> I–III
TB1–2	<i>De tempore barbarico</i> I–II
UQF	<i>De ultima quarta feria</i>

Abbreviations of other ancient works are listed in the bibliography.

Journals, Encyclopaedias, and Editions

ACCE	<i>Acta Conciliorum Œcumenicorum</i> , ed. E. Schwartz—J. Straub—R. Riedinger (Berolini: W. De Gruyter, 1914–1992).
AL	Augustinus-Lexikon
AntAfr	Antiquités Africaines
AnTard	Antiquité Tardive
AS	Acta Sanctorum
ASR	Annali di Scienze Religiose
ATAE	<i>Augustine through the Ages: an Encyclopaedia</i> , ed. A.D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999)
Aug	Augustinianum
AugSt	Augustinian Studies
BA	Bibliothèque Augustinienne
BLE	Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique
BS	Bibliotheca Sanctorum
BSFEM	Bulletin de la Société française d'études Mariennes
CCL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina
CI	Codices Iustiniani
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CCED	Conciliorum Œcumenicorum Decreta

CP	Corona Patrum
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
CTh	Codex Theodosianus
DO	<i>Dizionario di omiletica</i> , ed. M. Sodi—A. Triacca (2nd edn.; Torino—Gorle: Elledici—Velar, 2013)
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
EME	Early Medieval Europe
EphL	Ephemerides Liturgicae
FS	Frühmittelalterliche Studien
GCS	Griechische christliche Schriftsteller
HThR	The Harvard Theological Review
IJST	International Journal of the Classical Tradition
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
J ECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies
JEH	The Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JRH	Journal of Religious History
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism
JThS	Journal of Theological Studies
LCPM	Lectures Cristiane del Primo Millenio
MD	La Maison-Dieu
MDAI(R)	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Arch. Inst. Rom. Abt.
MEFRA	Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome, Antiquité
MGH AA	Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctores antiquissimi
MH	Museum Helveticum
MHR	Mediterranean Historical Review
NDPAC	Nuovo Dizionario di Patristica e Antichità Cristiane
NP	Der Neue Pauly
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
RB	Revue Benedictine
REA	Revue des Études Augustiniennes
RechAug	Recherches Augustiniennes et Patristiques
REJ	Revue des Études Juives
REL	Revue des Études Latines
RechSC	Recherches de science religieuse
RFIC	Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions
RomBarb	Romanobarbarica
RQ	Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte

RSLR	Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa
RTAM	Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SE	Sacris Erudiri
SEA	Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum
SM	Studi Medievali
SP	Studia Patristica
ThPh	Theologie und Philosophie
VetChr	Vetera Christianorum
VigChr	Vigiliae Christianae
VoxP	Vox Patrum
WS	Wiener Studien
WSA	Works of Saint Augustine
ZAC	Zeitschrift für Antike und Christentum

Introduction

In 430, the life of the most celebrated African theologian, Augustine of Hippo, came to its end at Hippo Regius, besieged by the Vandals. Notwithstanding the bishop's monumental oeuvre, numbering more than a hundred works containing about seven million words or fifteen thousand printed pages, everything else seemed to go to ruin; as P. Brown puts it, in just a year, 'there was nothing left of Augustine now but his library'.¹ Many of those who belonged to his congregation died, others fled, and the remainder was expecting life under Vandal rule. The golden age of Africa had ended, and no one knew what would come next. However, it was not yet the end for the Catholic Church there.

Moreover, still, no matter how it became weakened by a century of struggle with the 'party of Donatus', no matter how her situation changed under Vandal rule, the Catholic Church lived on. It was no longer a privileged religious group. Instead, it became persecuted and many Catholic Romans lost their property, ended up in exile, saw their families enslaved or killed, or expected a violent death themselves. To many of them, it looked like the glorious days of persecution would be back, not from pagan Rome anymore, but from the hands of barbarians claiming to be Christian.

Even if the golden age, admired until now for its monumental philosophical, theological, and ascetic efforts, was now gone, the Church faced new challenges, having an opportunity, despite the changed circumstances, to prove as wise and heroic as previous generations that could have enjoyed more peaceful and abundant conditions for life and spiritual growth. The Church Fathers of the first four centuries managed to translate the faith of the first Christian believers coming from a Judaism rooted in the cultural and religious context of peripheral first-century Palestine to the cultural, philosophical, and religious language of the Hellenic culture shared by the whole Mediterranean. This did not bring decay to the original New Testament faith, but it instead allowed the planting of the Christian faith in new ground, in order that the Gospel could be accepted and lived there. Similarly, after Constantine's turn, the Church adapted so that she could live in a changed political situation and she could reach those who were coming and help them transform their lives and not to accept the faith only for careerist or opportunist reasons. After Augustine's death, a similar step awaited his disciples and the entire church in Africa as a

1 Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 437.

whole: the ground had changed, but the Christian message was supposed to bring fruits and find its beauty even in the troubled times of change.

There are not as many witnesses for this period as for the timespan of Augustine's life. What is more, Augustine influenced his disciples and many other bishops to the extent that many other African authors remain hidden to us under the codename 'Pseudo-Augustine'. That does not mean that African texts 'after Augustine' are not interesting and that their theology does not contribute with anything new. In fact, these 'Pseudo-Augustines' testify that a little more than Augustine's library was left, the circle of his friends, disciples, and those who profited from him when they 'were able to hear him speaking in church and see him there present, especially if they were familiar with his manner of life among the fellow human beings'.²

Among them was also Quodvultdeus, a friend of Augustine and the bishop of Carthage in the decade after Augustine's death. Although he does not belong among the most radiant stars of the Patristic sky, his pre-baptismal catecheses offer an intriguing testimony to the life of the Church in Africa at the beginning of the Vandal rule. They also witness to his endeavour to prepare those who wished to be baptised, to prepare thoroughly for their Christian life after the baptism. To these discourses, the following pages are dedicated.

The ministry of a bishop in the metropolis of Africa observed especially through the prism of Quodvultdeus's pre-baptismal catecheses is the primary aim of this book. The identification of the works of this bishop is an achievement of the research that continued throughout the twentieth century; today's consensus agrees that the author of the studied text is Quodvultdeus of Carthage.³ The complexity of the linguistic analysis of this quest for authenticity of the texts which R. Brown collected in his edition of the *Corpus Christianorum* series attracted the scholars' attention to the philological and literary aspect of these writings.⁴ Quodvultdeus's discourses have been used many times as a witness to the historical situation in Vandal Africa.⁵

2 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 31. 9 (LCPM 45: 312; tr. O'Connell 130): *qui eum et loquentem in ecclesiam praesentem audire et videre potuerunt, et eius praesertim inter homines conversationem non ignoraverunt.*

3 See Chapter Two below.

4 See especially Germain Morin, 'Notes d'ancien littérature ecclésiastique', RB 13 (1896), 337–347; Id., 'Pour une future édition des opuscules de saint Quodvultdeus, évêque de Carthage au v^e siècle', RB 31 (1914–1919), 156–162; Id., *Sancti Aureli Augustini tractatus sive sermones inediti ex Codice Guelferbyitano 4096* (Kempten: Kösel, 1917); Prosper Schepens, 'Un traité à restituer à saint Quodvultdeus évêque de Carthage au v^e siècle', *RechSR* 10 (1919), 230–243; Desiderius Franses, *Die Werke des hl. Quodvultdeus, Bischofs von Karthago gestorben um 453* (München: Verlag der J.J. Lentnerschen Buchhandlung, 1920); Id., 'Een nieuwe kerkvader', *De Katholiek*

The portion of the research dedicated to the theological topics is a minority in respect to the other areas. D. Van Slyke brought the first theological mono-

- 162 (1922), 93–104; Prosper Schepens, 'Les œuvres de saint Quodvultdeus', *RechSR* 13 (1923), 76–78; Alfred Kappelmacher, 'Echte und unechte Predigten Augustins', *ws* 49 (1931), 89–102; A.D. Nock, 'Two Notes', *VigChr* 3 (1949), 48–56; Manlio Simonetti, 'Studi sulla letteratura cristiana d'Africa in età vandolica', *Rendiconti Istituto Lombardo—Classe di Lettere* 83 (1950), 407–424; Cyrille Lambot *Critique interne et sermons de saint Augustin* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 122 f.; Jorgen Raasted, 'A Fragment of an Unidentified Latin Sermon, Textually Related to Ps.-Augustinus Sermo 106', in *SP* 3 (1961): 108–115; Richard G. Kalkman, 'Two Sermons: *De Tempore Barbarico* Attributed to St. Quodvultdeus, Bishop of Carthage: A Study of Text and Attribution with Translation and Commentary', PhD Thesis (Catholic University of America, 1964); René Braun, 'Introduction', in Quodvultdeus, *Livre des promesses et des prédications de Dieu* (SC 101; Paris: Cerf, 1964), 13–130; Pierre Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques* (3rd edn.; Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1964); Id., 'Quodvultdeus redi-vivus', *Révue des Études Anciennes* 67/1–2 (1965), 165–170; Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, 'Sermon sur le Cantique de la Vigne attribuable à Quodvultdeus', *RB* 75 (1965), 109–135; Michele Pellegrino, 'Intorno a Quodvultdeus, *De promissionibus ac praedictionibus Dei*', *RSLR* 2 (1966), 240–245; Yvette Duval, 'Un nouveau lecteur probable de l'Histoire ecclésiastique de Rufin d'Aquilée: l'auteur du «Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei»', *Latomus* 26 (1967), 762–777; René Braun, 'Introduction', in *CCL* 60 (1976): i–cvi; Manlio Simonetti, 'Note sul testo di alcuni passi di opere attribuite a Quodvultdeus', *RFIC* 106 (1978), 291–299; Id., 'Qualche riflessione su Quodvultdeus di Cartagine', *RSLR* 14 (1978), 201–207; Id., *La produzione letteraria latina fra Romani e barbari (sec. v–VIII)* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1986), 35–39; Philippe Bruggisser, 'Le char du préfet. Echos païens et chrétiens d'une polémique dans l'Histoire Auguste et chez Quodvultdeus', in *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Parisinum*, ed. G. Bonamente and N. Duval (Macerata: Università degli studi di Macerata, 1991), 93–100; Manlio Simonetti, 'Di alcuni caratteri specifici della letteratura africana nei secoli v e vi', in *Cristianesimo e specificità regionali nel Mediterraneo latino (secc. IV–VI). XXII Incontro di Studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma, 6–8 maggio 1993* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1994), 127–136; *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*, ed. François Dolbeau (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996); Wolfgang Strobl, 'Notitiae quodvultdeanae', *VigChr* 52/2 (1998), 193–203; Antonio V. Nazzaro, 'Quodvultdeus: un vescovo dell'Africa vandolica a Napoli', in *Società multiculturali nei secoli v–ix: scontri, convivenza, integrazione nel Mediterraneo occidentale; atti delle VII Giornate di Studio sull'Età Romanobarbarica, Benevento, 31 maggio–2 giugno 1999* (Napoli: Arte Tipografica, 2001), 33–52; Id., 'La produzione omiletica del vescovo di Cartagine Quodvultdeus', in *Le forme e i luoghi della predicazione. Atti del Seminario internazionale di studi (Macerata 21–23 novembre 2006)*, ed. G. Frenguelli and C. Micaelli (Macerata: eum, 2009), 27–67; Id., 'Contro giudei, pagani ed eretici: reazione religiosa e politica all'invasione dei Vandali ariani di Quodvultdeus vescovo di Cartagine (v sec.); *Auctores Nostri* 14 (2014), 513–552; Felicien Mbonigaba, *La Traditio Symboli nell'Africa cristiana all'epoca dell'invasione dei Vandali* (Roma: LAS, 2015); Robin Whelan, 'Surrogate Fathers: Imaginary Dialogue and Patristic Culture in Late Antiquity', *EME* 25/1 (2017), 19–37.
- 5 For example, Jean-Louis Maier, *L'épiscopat de l'Afrique romaine, vandale et byzantine* (Rome: Institut Suisse do Rome, 1973); Walter A. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans, AD 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980); Manlio Simonetti, 'L'intellettuale cristiano di fronte alle invasioni barbariche in Occidente', in *Il comportamento dell'intel-*

graph dedicated to Quodvultdeus's eschatology in his *Liber promissionum*.⁶ The motifs of the Holy Innocents in the context of African homiletic tradition have been studied.⁷ The theological aspects of the sermons attributed to Quodvultdeus have not yet attracted sufficient interest. To the baptismal and Christological context of Quodvultdeus's sermons, a paper of R.J. De Simone has been dedicated, although the author mostly only very briefly notices the

lettuale nella società antica (Genova: Università di Genova, 1980), 93–117; Antonino Isola, 'Temi di impegno civile nell'omiletica africana di età vandaliana', *VetChr* 22 (1985), 273–289; Robert B. Eno 'Christian Reaction to the Barbarian Invasions and the Sermons of Quodvultdeus', in *Preaching in the Patristic Age. Studies in Honour of Walter J. Burghardt, SJ*, ed. D.G. Hunter (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 139–161; Antonino Isola, *I cristiani dell'Africa vandaliana nei sermones del tempo (429–534)* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1990); Hervé Inglebert, 'Un exemple historiographique au V^e siècle: la conception de l'histoire chez Quodvultdeus de Carthage et ses relations avec la «Cité de Dieu»', *REA* 37/2 (1991), 307–320; P.S. Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects, and Kings. The Roman West, 395–565* (Chapel Hill—London: University of North Carolina Press—Duckworth, 1992); Raúl González Salinero, 'Invasión y retroceso de la Iglesia en el norte de África: Quodvultdeus de Cartago frente a vándalos y arrianos', in *Arqueólogos, historiadores y filólogos: homenaje a Fernando Gascó* (n. p.: Kolaios, 1995), ii. 479–492; Id., 'The Anti-Judaism of Quodvultdeus in the Vandal and Catholic Context of the 5th Century in North Africa', *REJ* 155/3–4 (1996), 447–459; François Decret, *Le christianisme en Afrique du Nord ancienne* (Paris: Seuil, 1996); Antonino Isola, 'Note sulle eresie nell'Africa del periodo vandalo', *VetChr* 34 (1997), 231–249; María Elvira Gil Egea, *África en tiempos de los vándalos: continuidad y mutaciones de las estructuras sociopolíticas romanas* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 1998); Raúl González Salinero, *El antijudaísmo cristiano occidental, siglos IV y V. Colección Estructuras y procesos* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2000); Id., 'La invasión vándala en los Sermones de Quodvultdeus de Cartago', *Florenta Iliberritana* 12 (2001), 221–237; Id., *Poder y conflicto religioso en el norte de África: Quodvultdeus de Cartago y los vándalos* (Madrid: Signifer Libros, 2002); Alessandra Rodolfi, 'A Difficult Co-Existence in Vandal Africa: King Geiseric and the Catholics', in *SP* 39 (2006), 117–123; Antonino Isola, 'Note sulle eresie nell'Africa del periodo vandalo', in *Lente pertexere telam: saggi di letteratura cristiana tardoantica* (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 2011), 67–87; Elena Zocca, 'Mutazioni della tipologia martiriale in età vandaliana: un diverso punto di osservazione sulla 'persecutio' anticattolica', in *Hagiologica. Studi per Réginald Grégoire*, ed. A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, U. Paoli, and P. Piatti (Fabriano: Monastero San Silvestro Abate, 2012), 597–631; Robin Whelan, 'Arianism in Africa', in *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*, ed. G.M. Berndt and R. Steinacher (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 239–255; Bruno Pottier, 'Les donatistes, l'arianisme et le royaume vandale', in *Littérature, politique et religion en Afrique vandale*, ed. É. Wolff (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 109–126; Robin Whelan, *Being Christian in Vandal Africa: The Politics of Orthodoxy in the Post-Imperial West* (Oakland, Cal.: University of California Press, 2018).

6 Daniel G. Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus of Carthage: The Apocalyptic Theology of a Roman African in Exile* (Strathfield: St Pauls Publications, 2003).

7 Francesco Scorza Barcellona, 'La celebrazione dei santi Innocenti nell'omiletica latina dei secoli IV–VI', *SM* 15 (1974), 705–767.

baptismal and Christological topics present in the bishop's discourses.⁸ A. Isola studied the typology of the Passover Lamb present in these discourses.⁹ This Italian author also studies the Mariological aspect of African sermons.¹⁰ The introduction to three 'creedal homilies' by T.M. Finn touches both ritual and anti-heretical aspects of three of Quodvultdeus's sermons.¹¹ B. Degórski dedicated his research to some aspects of incarnation in the sermons on the creed.¹² Although the historians of liturgy did not leave the pre-baptismal rites of the scrutiny and renunciation of the devil present in Quodvultdeus's sermons unobserved,¹³ a wider theological understanding of Quodvultdeus's ministry, as viewed through his pre-baptismal sermons, has not yet been studied.

His quest was to prepare well his catechumens for baptism and to introduce them to the deeper meaning of what the Christians gathered in the Church believe and celebrate. In doing so, he did not limit himself to celebrating the

- 8 Russel J. De Simone, 'The Baptismal and Christological Catechesis of Quodvultdeus', *Aug* 25 (1985), 265–282.
- 9 Antonino Isola, 'La tipologia dell'Agnello pasquale in [Quodvultdeus]', in *Sangue e antropologia, v. Riti e culto*, ed. F. Vattioni (Roma: Pia Unione Preziosissimo Sangue, 1987), ii. 1203–1211.
- 10 Antonino Isola, 'Mariologia comunitaria nell'omiletica africana di età vandalica', in *Lente pertexere telam*, 57–65.
- 11 Thomas M. Finn, *The Creedal Homilies* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004), 1–22.
- 12 Bazyli Degórski, 'Il mistero dell'incarnazione nel commento al «simbolo apostolico» di San Quodvultdeus di Cartagine', *VoxP* 35/64 (2015), 119–130.
- 13 M.-É. Boismard, "I Renounce Satan, his Poms, and his Works", in *Baptism in the New Testament: A Symposium* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964), 107–114; Victor Saxer, *Les rites de l'initiation chrétienne du 11^e au 17^e siècle* (Spoleto: CISAM, 1988), 401–416; Thomas M. Finn, *From Death to Rebirth. Ritual and Conversion in Antiquity* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997); Vittorino Grossi, *La catechesi battesimale agli inizi del v secolo* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1993); William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (1st edn.; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995); Thomas M. Finn, 'Quodvultdeus: The Preacher and the Audience. The Homilies on the Creed', in *SP* 31 (1997), 42–58; Id., 'It Happened One Saturday Night: Ritual and Conversion in Augustine's North Africa', *JAAR* 58/4 (1998), 589–616; Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology, and Drama* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), 106–122; Daniel G. Van Slyke, 'The Devil and His Poms in Fifth-Century Carthage: Renouncing Spectacula with Spectacular Imagery', *DOP* 59 (2005), 53–72; Dominic E. Serra, 'New Observations about the Scrutinies of the Elect in Early Roman Practice.' *Worship* 80/6 (2006), 511–527; Daniel G. Van Slyke, 'Breathing Blessing, Bestowing the Spirit: "Insufflatio" as a Distinct Ritual Gesture in Ancient Christian Initiation', *EphL* 121/3 (2007), 301–327; Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church. History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, Mich.—Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009); Matthieu Pignot, 'Questioning Christian Baptism: Insights from Augustine's Correspondence', *RHE* 111/3–4 (2016), 452–482; Id., 'The catechumenate in late antique Africa: Augustine of Hippo, his contemporaries and early recognition (ca. 360–530 AD)', PhD thesis (Oxford, 2016), 172–222.

rite with them, but his preparation was much more thorough. To deliver such a pre-baptismal, mystagogical catechesis, he had theological grounds to do that. That is why Quodvultdeus's catechesis present in the pre-baptismal sermons is the primary objective of this book. What did he do in these catecheses? How did he approach his audience, what was his method? Why did he proceed in his baptismal curriculum as he did? What were his theological positions on which he built his teaching?

The corpus of these discourses has been established given their occasion and topic. Nine of the sermons—*Contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arrianos* (CIPA), *De symbolo I–III* (S1–3), *De cantico novo* (CN), *De ultima quarta feria* (UQF), *De catachysmo* (C), and *De accedentibus ad gratiam* (A1–2)—will be particularly considered. The critical edition of R. Braun (CCL 60) has been used for the research.¹⁴

As I have mentioned, the perspective of this book is primarily a theological one. Given the multidisciplinary approach to today's Patristic studies, the research conscientiously builds upon studies especially in late ancient history, archaeology, philosophy, history of art, history of religion, philology, and other disciplines. Theology cannot deny its historical character, as it primarily is a 'history of salvation': God's revelation and dealings with man happen in history, in concrete temporal-spatial coordinates. That is why a historical overview and setting of Quodvultdeus's works are considered essential for the comprehension and theological interpretation of Quodvultdeus's works. At the same time, the reader and interpreter of Quodvultdeus's homilies—as well as of any other religious or theological texts—in principle cannot be 'neutral' or above his own intellectual and religious stance when he approaches the literary and historical documents that are at stake. Theologically, I find myself a part of the tradition to which belonged also Augustine, Quodvultdeus, and many other Church Fathers, as well as much later theologians and saints of the Middle Ages and modern times and which is called 'Catholic'. This tradition has defined—or better, has struggled to find—its orthodoxy, and being convinced of the objective character of truth, cannot imagine more than one orthodoxy, although it can express itself in multifarious ways. The choice of this theological tradition can be easily justified by the fact that Quodvultdeus considered himself part of the same tradition too.

The book is divided into three parts. The first of these parts might not be as interesting for those who are familiar with the historical and religious situation of North Africa, particularly in the 430s, with Quodvultdeus's life and

14 Turnholt: Brepols, 1976.

writings attributed to him, and with Augustine's care for the catechumens: they are encouraged to skip this. Nonetheless, three steps are necessary to set the background for the exposition in this book to understand the preaching addressed primarily to the populace of Carthage in the 430s. Chapter One deals with the arrival of the Vandals to North Africa and with the religious situation of this part of the world, especially just before and during Quodvultdeus's episcopacy in Carthage. Such a context is considered crucial for the right reading and interpretation of his pre-baptismal catecheses, especially for Quodvultdeus's anti-heretical language that can be read today as severe and harsh. Chapter Two presents Quodvultdeus's life and work. The life story of this deacon and later bishop of Carthage would also be helpful in order to understand his discourses, and it is also important to ask during which years Quodvultdeus's episcopacy took place: a question that seems to be crucial for dating his sermons. The other subsection studies the authenticity of works attributed to him, together with the history of the scholarship related to this problem. This would permit working with the pre-catechetical discourses and other works as with an oeuvre of a single author, identified with the bishop Quodvultdeus. Chapter Three touches already the theological and liturgical issue of the catechumenate as the period of preparation for baptism in the life and work of Augustine, friend and master of Quodvultdeus. As Augustine's theology was a natural background for Quodvultdeus's thinking and practice, the baptismal preparation in the works of the bishop of Hippo seems like a perfect background, given the number of witnesses, for further inquiry for the same institution in Quodvultdeus's Carthage.

Part Two commences by dealing specifically with Quodvultdeus's pre-baptismal catecheses and builds upon the previous presentation of Part One. In this part, a thorough examination of the catechumenate institutions in Quodvultdeus's Carthage, as present in his pre-baptismal catecheses, will be made. The single stages of the preparation will be presented, but with special care not to interpolate the missing gaps from Augustine's material and not to harmonise the procedures with the limited material we have from other authors who deal with baptismal preparation in Late Antiquity. The aim of Chapter Four is to investigate the initial period of the entrance into the catechumenate and the first stage of the catechumenate which would culminate with giving one's name for baptism several weeks before Easter, when the sacrament was supposed to be administered, including the witness brought by the sermon *De cantico novo*. Chapter Five pays attention to those pre-baptismal rites where Quodvultdeus's discourses offer more material than any other Patristic document: the scrutiny, including exorcisms and renunciation of the devil, his pomps, and angels, and the handing over of the baptismal creed (*traditio symboli*). These rites held particular importance for the bishop of Carthage, as there are six sermons at

our disposal delivered on that occasion (CIPA, S1–3, and A1–2). Chapter Six is devoted to the time of preparation immediately before baptism, as witnessed by two sermons *De ultima quarta feria* and *De cataclysmo*, which include very powerful typologies that led the audience to understand the meaning of the baptism they were to receive.

The third and final part of the book turns the attention towards what Quodvultdeus's tried to achieve in his ministry as a bishop. Chapter Seven concentrates upon the means he used to build and educate the community of his church. It presents his ecclesiology that can be seen as a fundament of his theology presented to the candidates for baptism and also two methods he used to enlighten his flock on the meaning of God's action in the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist: the typological exegesis of the Bible and the mystagogical method that taught them how to perceive the invisible realities present beyond the visible signs in the reality they were going to enter. Chapter Eight, lastly, tries to portray how Quodvultdeus set limits to his community, trying to keep them safe from anything that could endanger their prospect of salvation and eternal life. Is the anti-heretical language present in his homilies just a sign of intolerance and desire for power, or could it be read as a kind of spiritual warfare the candidates would enter with their baptism? Was the Church more a political and social entity that competed with any other political or religious power, or did he envision the Church primarily as a spiritual body? In other words, is it possible to understand better the passages of Quodvultdeus's catecheses using the immediate liturgical and catechetical context of these discourses? I consider this final chapter as offering new directions on how to read and understand Quodvultdeus's sermons.

PART 1

Africa, the Vandals, and Quodvultdeus



Introduction to Part 1

North Africa was imprinted in a striking manner into the features that have been preserved in Western Christianity up to this day. Africa has been the inspirational engine of the Latin-speaking part of the Roman Empire, spanning from the first martyrs from Scillium and followed by such great names at the beginning of Latin Christian literature as Tertullian and Cyprian, which led to a century of the Church's internal struggle between Catholics (called also Caecilianists) and Donatists, and reaching as far as to Augustine, the greatest of the Latin Fathers. Despite various common problems, Christian Africa became a standard in the life of the Church to which even today the churches of the Christian West relate.

In the year 429, Africa was invaded by the Vandals. The idyllic image that was held thus far of this province and of the life of the Church suddenly and significantly changed. Augustine himself was forced to view how in the last months of his life, spent in Hippo besieged by Vandals, his lifelong efforts were collapsing—some of his parishioners were slaughtered by the Vandals, while others had been forced to flee. Possidius narrates that Augustine saw ‘churches stripped of their priests and ministers, consecrated virgins and men vowed to continence scattered in all directions,’ to be either killed by the sword, to die of their tortures, or to fall into a captivity where many of them would eventually lose their faith.¹ Possidius paints a picture of Africa without ministers able to administer the sacraments and without those who would desire them to be administered.² Although we should read this as literary hyperbole, today's reader can still grasp the trauma of Augustine's circle brought about by the barbaric invasion and the collapse, not only of Roman rule but also of the Catholic faith that so far had made its victorious journey through the Empire and the world. And they still perceived the age after Augustine to be something that fell into God's history of salvation, as Possidius shows in Augustine's dictum vis-à-vis the unheard-of destruction of churches and the suffering of its members: ‘No one is great who is amazed that wood and stone collapse and mortals die.’³

1 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 7 (LCPM 45: 274): *ecclesias sacerdotibus ac ministris destitutas, virginesque sacras et quosque continentes ubique dissipatos ...*

2 Ibidem.

3 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 11 (LCPM 45: 276): *Non erit magnus magnum putans quod cadunt ligna et lapides, et moriuntur mortales.*

In Africa, the years after Augustine's death are the years of a dying Church, or—perhaps better—of a Church condemned with a death sentence. Until recently, this era evaded the scientific interest of research. The Vandal incursion had been looked upon as an anomaly, as a sign of the decay of a prosperous Roman province where ancient Christianity flourished the most. It was only in recent decades that this epoch has been found to be much more interesting than everyone had hoped for. If we wish to understand the theology of a bishop who lived in the decade following Augustine's death, it is essential to grasp well the times and situations he lived and served in. This will help us discern the weight of Quodvultdeus's reasoning in various parts of his works, and also to evaluate if his insistence on various topics is or is not understandable.

North Africa, Carthage, and Its Religion

1 Roman Africa

Let us now rewind six centuries. In spring 146 BC, the Romans, in the Third Punic War, exasperated by the war thirsty party led by Cato's hankering for a 'final solution' of the Carthaginian issue embodied in the legendary chorus *Carthaginem esse delendam*, totally defeated the Carthaginians, the heirs of the biblical Tyre and Sidon. They razed to the ground the capital city, thus ending a chapter in the life of the originally Phoenician colony that had been established at the end of the ninth century BC.¹ The subsequent history of Africa would be connected with Rome, however, this does not mean that many elements of Punic culture, religion, and language were to be lost, as is witnessed six centuries later in passing mentions in Augustine's works.²

It was the Romans who gave Africa its name. Originally, this name probably designated the area of the river Bagrada or Makara, inhabited by the Libyan tribe of the Afri.³ However, at the latest from the time of the Second Punic War, this referred to a significantly larger area, as indicated by the triumphal addition *Africanus* gained by the general Publius Cornelius Scipio the Elder. Later, this term designated the whole area of today's Northern Africa with the exception of Egypt.⁴

From the point of view of Roman administration, following the conquest of Carthage the gradual spread of administered land, its colonisation and civil wars, *Africa Proconsularis* became a senatorial province with its capital Carthage in 27 BC, neighbouring in the east with the province *Cyrenae*

1 Regarding the history of Carthage, see especially Serge Lancel, *Carthage: a history* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002); on pp. 1–34 he introduces the issue of the Phoenician colonisation of the western Mediterranean and the dating of Carthage being established based on ancient traditions as well as archaeological findings, and on pp. 409–427 he introduces the destruction of Carthage by the Romans.

2 Twenty-two passages of Augustine's work, where the language of Berber tribes is mentioned, are studied by W.M. Green, 'Augustine's Use of Punic', in *Semitic and Oriental Studies presented to W. Popper* (Berkeley—Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 179–190.

3 Werner Vycichl, 'La peuplade berbère des Afri et l'origine du nom d'Afrique', *Onomastica* 19 (1975), 486–488.

4 Werner Huß, John Scheid, and Thomas Leisten, 'Africa', in *Brill's New Pauly* (2016) http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e106700, accessed 14th January 2017.

and in the west with the province *Mauretania*.⁵ At the time of its greatest expansion, the Roman Empire administered in Africa a land area of approximately 350,000 km².⁶ At the end of the third century, Diocletian divided the old province including the area of current Tunisia and western Libya, with its capital Carthage, into three new ones, namely *Africa Proconsularis*, *Africa Byzacena*, and *Africa Tripolitana*. At the same time, he connected them with Numidia with its capital Cirta (currently Constantine) in the land of today's eastern Algeria (divided into the provinces *Numidia Cirtensis*, *Numidia Militiana*), and Mauretania with its capital Caesaria (today Cherchell) in the land of today's middle and western Algeria and Morocco, administratively divided into the provinces *Mauretania Sitifensis* and *Mauretania Caesariensis*, creating one diocese: *Africa*.⁷

The safety of the Roman inhabitants and the defence against not particularly unusual rebellions was provided by *legio III Augusta*, since the time of Trajan situated in Lambaesis in the province *Numidia Militiana*.⁸ With the exception of the proconsulate Africa, which had its highest representative as a *proconsul* who was granted administrative as well as military power, the other provinces were managed by a governor holding administrative power instituted by the emperor, while military power was held by the legate of the Third Legion.⁹

Despite many occurrences of political, social, and religious unrest, the whole diocese of Africa was very important, even being a key area for the Roman Empire due to its geographical position, economic wealth, and its intellectual and spiritual activity.¹⁰ With the riches of the African fields and olive groves, the saying 'how much corn Africa reaps' was apt;¹¹ Africa was 'the granary of Rome', supplying Italy and other provinces especially with olive oil and wine, as Quodvultdeus witnessed to in one of his sermons.¹² Thus, the supply of not only the

5 Duncan Fishwick, 'On the Origins of *A. Proconsularis*', *AntAfr* 29 (1993), 53–62; Decret, *Christianisme*, 7f.

6 Decret, *Christianisme*, 9.

7 The administrative state of Africa and Numidia at the time of the Vandal invasion is specified by Claude Lepelley, 'Quelques aspects de l'administration des provinces romaines d'Afrique avant la conquête vandale', *AnTard* 10 (2003), 61–72.

8 Decret, *Christianisme*, 9.

9 Regarding the state of the Roman administration of the African provinces in late antiquity, see Jonathan Conant, *Staying Roman: Conquest and Identity in Africa and the Mediterranean, 439–700* (Cambridge—New York: CUP, 2012), 9–12.

10 Huß et al.

11 Hor. S. 2. 3. 87 (ed. Rushton Fairclough 160).

12 TB2 5. 4 (CCL 60: 476 f.); but also Teresa Clay, 'Carthage et son commerce dans l'antiquité

poor of the Eternal City but also the Emperor's court and the administrative apparatus was dependent on Africa.¹³

Hundreds of Roman towns and villages were scattered across northern Africa.¹⁴ Some of them were originally Punic, and under Roman dominion they were reconstructed, while others were newly established by the Romans.¹⁵ However, it is not possible to presuppose that the whole area administered by Rome had been Romanised.¹⁶ The Roman government held mainly the coastline and the large inland strip spanning to the Atlas mountains, inhabited by the Berber communities, which the Romans called *Maurisii*, the Mauri.¹⁷ Like other places in late Roman antiquity, in fourth and fifth century Africa, the inhabitants were split into two groups: the higher group was the 'honourable ones' (*uiri honestiores*), and the remainder was comprised of the common people (*humiles*). The highest strata of the privileged group were comprised of senators (*clarissimi*), from which African city aristocracy originated.¹⁸ The common people in towns joined together in profession associations; Augustine's preaching and letters testify also to a significant number of slaves and the blossoming business focused upon them.¹⁹

The Africans were not merely passive recipients of the conveniences of Roman civilisation. They actively created it. It was precisely Africa that gave Rome such cultural and political figures as the writer Apuleius, the poet Terence, and the emperor Septimius Severus. Roman culture was so under the skin of north African people that even at the time when formal Roman rule in Africa ended, many Roman towns there continued actively communicating with the rest of the Mediterranean. The culture of a not insignificant number of people

tardive', *Histoire et archéologie de l'Afrique du Nord, Actes du v^e colloque, Avignon* (Paris: Editions du C.T.H.S., 1990), 349–360.

13 *Expos.* 61 (SC 124: 200); Conant, 1f.

14 Decret, *Christianisme*, 12 estimates for Roman Africa an admirable number of around five hundred cities, from which two hundred were located in the territory of today's Tunisia; thus, urbanisation reached between one quarter and one third of people here.

15 Adalbert G. Hamman, *La vita quotidiana nell'Africa di sant'Agostino* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1989), 8.

16 W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); Christian Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1955).

17 Walter Pohl, 'The Vandals: Fragments of a Narrative', in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa*, ed. A.H. Merrills (Farnham; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004), 39.

18 Regarding the social structure of Roman inhabitants, see A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), ii. 523–563.

19 Aug. *en. Ps.* 124. 7; 148. 10; *ep.* 199. 12; 10* (CCL 40: 1840f., 2172f.; CSEL 59: 254; 88: 46–51); Lancel, 'Africa', in AL 1 (1986–1994), 201.

was so influenced by Roman education that in some parts of Tunisia Latin was used as a common language as late as the twelfth century.²⁰

1.1 *The City of Carthage*

Undoubtedly Africa Proconsularis was the most important Roman province in Africa with its capital Carthage. Julius Caesar decided upon establishing *colonia Concordia Iulia Karthago* in 44 BC and soon after his death the city was founded. As early as in 29 BC, Octavian had the city extended and Carthage soon afterwards became the second largest city of the West. The emperor Septimius Severus, originating from African Leptis Magna, granted *ius italicum* to the city in the third century, conferring upon the city privileges pertaining to Italian soil; thus, the city was among other things freed from the land tax.²¹ At that same time, Herodian classed Carthage regarding its size as being just behind Rome and Alexandria.²² At the end of the fourth century, Ausonius rated it also in third place, however, according to him, Carthage was competing with Constantinople for second place.²³ It is estimated that in the fifth century around 100 thousand people lived there.²⁴ Thus, this local metropolis surpassed the borders of Africa with its importance. Besides its administrative and economic importance, Carthage held a prestigious place also in the intellectual field and its schools were highly sought after due to the prestige of their teachers of rhetoric, philosophy, and literature.²⁵

Archaeological finds confirm the city's extraordinary boom in the fourth century. Although soldiers of the praetorian prefect Rufus Volusianus, who was sent in 310 by Maxentius against the usurper Domitius Alexander, significantly damaged the city,²⁶ a significant part of the city's infrastructure was rebuilt

20 Al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat* 104 f., cit. in Conant, 363.

21 Claude Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine au Bas-Empire* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1979–1981), ii. 11.

22 Herodian 6. 6. 1 (ed. Whittaker ii. 116).

23 Auson. *Ordo* 2 (ed. Green 189).

24 Lepelley, *Cités*, ii. 48; Gilbert Charles Picard, *Les religions de l'Afrique antique* (Paris: Plon, 1954), 14 estimates up to 300 thousand inhabitants with regards to the existence of suburbs. The *status quaestionis* of archaeological research is summarised, for example, by Yvette Duval, 'L'état actuel des recherches archéologiques sur Carthage chrétienne', *AnTard* 5 (1997), 309–347.

25 Aug. *conf.* 3. 1. 1–3; 4. 7. 12; 5. 8. 14 (CCL 27: 27 f., 46); Salvian. *gub.* 7. 16 (SC 220: 440).

26 Zos. 2. 12 (ed. Paschoud i. 83) depicts this military campaign as especially brutal. Following his victory at Milvian Bridge, Constantine had Volusian's head delivered to himself. The city's reconstruction resulted in a relatively small number of epigraphic findings from the preceding era, thus not much is known about the city's history: see Lepelley, *Cités*, ii. 12 f.

soon after. An anonymous writing *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, originating most likely during the reign of Constantine II, praised the symmetrical network of Carthage's streets, resembling a grove.²⁷ In the city, beautiful public buildings were present, similar to other Roman cities—a visitor could come across a forum, a number of spas, an amphitheatre, and an odeon, as well as temples consecrated to various gods.²⁸ *Expositio* especially praises the harbour and regards the street of the goldsmiths as a marvel.²⁹ The city remained without ramparts; these were built around the city later in connection with barbarian invasions under the emperor Theodosius II and the regent Placidius in 425; however, these remained without avail during the Vandal invasion fourteen years later.³⁰

Literary evidence about the people of Carthage is not missing. Again, the author of *Expositio* notes that Carthaginians say one thing but behave in a completely different way—and he reckons that despite there being a large number of people, only a few here are good people. Together with this, he is also surprised that in a such a beautiful city people are not interested in anything other than the games in the amphitheatre.³¹ Amongst these games, paid for most often thanks to the activities of the rich classes, is, for example, hunting with beasts in the amphitheatre (*uenatio*), theatre mimes, chariot races in the circus, and naval games in a water-filled arena (*naumachia*).³² Other authors also notice this passion, or better to say vice, considering the Carthaginians' interest in games in the amphitheatre and circus, as well as in the theatre, to be legendary.³³

27 *Expos.* 61 (SC 124: 202).

28 Carthage's reconstruction in the fourth century is described by Picard, 26.

29 *Expos.* 61 (SC 124: 202); the harbour is described by Picard, 36–40.

30 Vict. Vit. 1. 16; 3. 15 f. (ed. Lancel 104, 181 f.); Procop. 3. 5. 8; 3. 15. 9 (ed. Dewing 48, 132); *chron. Gall.* a. 452 (MGH AA 9: 658).

31 *Expos.* 61 (SC 124: 202). Regarding games in Rome in general, see Paul Plass, *The Game of Death in Ancient Rome: Arena Sport and Political Suicide* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

32 Georges Ville, 'Les jeux de gladiateurs dans l'empire chrétien', *MEFRA* 72 (1960), 319 f. reaches the conclusion that, unlike in Rome, gladiatorial games were not organised any more in this period in Africa. Picard, 59–97 shows how the theme of games and races in the circus is frequently found in mosaic finds in Carthage.

33 Salvian. *gub.* 7. 13–17 (SC 220: 438–442) even opines that the Vandal conquest of Carthage was God's punishment for this particular vice. The attitude of Christians to games and theatre is investigated, for example, by Timothy D. Barnes, 'Christians and the Theater', in *Beyond the Fifth Century: Interactions with Greek Tragedy from the Fourth Century BCE to the Middle Ages*, ed. I. Gildenhard and M. Revermann (Berlin—New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 315–334.

The reader might recall a fascination with games that in Augustine's *Confessions* seized his friend Alypius, who later became bishop in the city of Augustine's birth, Thagaste.³⁴ It seems that a passionate interest for this brutal entertainment was nothing unusual in Carthage. Originally, these games had religious and political meaning in Roman society. However, during the fourth century this was disappearing and the games that were originally supposed to maintain peace with the gods (*pax deorum*) now merely served to provide entertainment and pleasure for the Carthaginians.³⁵ Perhaps also due to the general popularity of these games, the civil authorities were more lenient. Emperor Honorius, who issued laws against public manifestations of paganism, wrote in 399 to the proconsul Apollodorus not to ban all popular celebrations including circus games.³⁶ In Carthage, in the first half of the fifth century, there even existed the office of *tribunus uoluptatum*, who was in charge of organising these games.³⁷ The frequency of such games in Carthage then witnesses again to the significant economic prosperity enjoyed by the city in this period.³⁸ It was Christian bishops who more often stood against the various forms of games and theatre for their bloodthirst as well as their traditional connection with paganism.³⁹ Also, Augustine criticises in his sermons the Carthaginians' interest in games; for this, he was repeatedly invited to Carthage by the bishop Aurelius.⁴⁰ The games in Carthage continued until the Vandal conquest in 439 and, seemingly, also afterwards.⁴¹

Even in the fourth and fifth centuries, when we can observe economic difficulties and decline in other parts of the empire, it was possible to consider Carthage to be a fortunate city where the difficulties of late antiquity passed them by.⁴² In this period, Martianus Capella describes Carthage as 'once famous in war, now awesome in her prosperity'.⁴³ Thus, people must have truly felt consternation when the city was conquered in 439.

34 Aug. *conf.* 6. 8. 13 (CCL 27: 82).

35 *CTh.* 12. 1. 145; Lepelley, *Cités*, ii. 44.

36 *CTh.* 16. 10. 17 = *CI* 1. 11. 4 (SC 497: 452).

37 *CTh.* 15. 7. 13.

38 Lepelley, *Cités*, ii. 46.

39 The attitude of Latin Church Fathers to ancient dramatists is discussed in detail by Heiko Jürgens, *Pompa diaboli. Die lateinischen Kirchenväter und das antike Theater* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1972).

40 Aug. *en. Ps.* 80; 102; 103; 146; 147 (CCL 39: 1119–1135; 40: 1450–1535, 1979–1989, 2121–2137), A.-M. La Bonnardière, 'Les «Enarrationes in psalmos» prêchées par saint Augustin à Carthage en décembre 409', *RechAug* 11 (1976), 52–90 dated these sermons to December 409.

41 *TB* 1. 1 (CCL 60: 423 f.).

42 Lepelley, *Cités*, ii. 25.

43 Mart. Cap. 6. 669 (ed. Harris Stahl and R. Johnson 250 f.).

1.2 *The Religion of Africa*

Thanks to Augustine, we connect Africa with the golden age of Christianity. However, it is necessary to know that the African people, neither before the arrival of Christianity nor afterwards, lived in any religious vacuum. On the contrary, their religious experience was very rich and diverse. The capital Carthage was a true Mediterranean crossroads where the local people's religion met with the religions of Egypt and Greece, as well as those of the Middle East.

We cannot say much about the religion of the North African people. The Phoenicians brought their polytheistic religion to Carthage and we encounter its protagonists also in the books of the Old Testament: amongst the important gods was Ba'al Hammon, the fertility goddess Tanit, and the god of health Eshmun.⁴⁴ When Africa was subjugated by the Romans, as elsewhere, they did not attempt to enforce their gods upon the local people. Neither did they restrict the original cults, with the exception of human sacrifices being offered to Ba'al. However, assimilation gradually took place together with Romanising and, quite naturally, the translating of the original gods' names to Latin. The Punic fertility goddess Tanit was identified with the Roman Juno Caelestis and replaced it as the most worshipped god in Carthage. Similarly, Ba'al Hammon was transformed into Saturn, who was worshipped throughout the whole of Africa, and Eshmun's cult was modified into that of the god Aesculapius.⁴⁵

Roman religion did not consist of a unified teaching; rather, it was a system of practices regarding what was necessary for establishing and preserving the good relationship between the city and the gods. Thus, it was strongly interconnected with political life, and manifestations of piety were, at the same time, also manifestations of loyalty and conformism to the current regime. Religion was organised by city officers (*decuriones*), who oversaw the administration of the local temples and cults. The cult of the Roman gods, together with its pontifex, augurs, and *flamines*, thus inseparably belonged to the running of magistrate's officers in Carthage as well as the whole of Roman Africa.⁴⁶

44 Lancel, *Carthage*, 194–201.

45 The relationship between the original and the Roman cults has been researched by James B. Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 132–153; see also Friedrich Rakob, 'Ein punisches Heiligtum in Karthago und sein römischer Nachfolger. Erster Vorbericht', *MDAI(R)* 98 (1991), 33–80; Picard, *Religions*; Marcel Leglay, *Saturne africaine: histoire* (Paris: De Boccard, 1966); Lancel, *Carthage*, 432–436; A.D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 750–773.

46 Regarding the organisation and specifics of Roman religion in Carthage see Rives, 17–99.

Gods' statues decorated temples and the areas in front of them, as well as public spaces; the houses of Carthage's people were often adorned with mythological motifs. Besides there being the cult of the Capitoline Triad of Jove, Juno, and Minerva, which was presumably centred on the Byrsa hill,⁴⁷ as well as the cult of the emperor's genius,⁴⁸ the original cults held a significant place in Carthage as well. Besides this, some Eastern cults were also popular to a certain extent; even during the reign of Constantine the temple of Cybele and Attis was reconstructed.⁴⁹ Other cults entered Africa as well, including the cult of the god Mithra and the Egyptian Serapis.⁵⁰

In Carthage, as in other parts of the Roman world, a community of diasporic Jews was situated, appearing at the latest in the second century. They differed from the majority of people not only with their customs and abstinence from pork but also by not partaking in sacrifices and cults except for services to their one God. The close contacts between Carthage and Palestine were manifested by the fact that Tertullian at the end of the second century had available to him at least some rabbinic texts, and also that the opinions of the Carthaginian rabbis Abba and Hinena/Hanan are a part of the Jerusalem as well as the Babylonian Talmud. Although not much is known about the life of Jewish communities in western provinces before the fourth century, it is presumable that in many things this resembled other diasporic communities. Jewish community life was concentrated around the synagogue, which functioned as a place for religious services as well as a community meeting place. It was possible that in Carthage there was more than one synagogue; findings in the necropolis in Gammarth may indicate that in the third century the Carthaginian Jewish community consisted of at least 300–500 people, however, it is possible that it was even larger.⁵¹ Similar to other places in the Ancient World, the Jewish religion attracted the attention of some pagans with its monotheism, being devoid of anthropomorphisms. These were present in Carthage as well: one discussion between a Jewish proselyte and a Christian became around the turn of the

47 Ibidem, 156.

48 Further development of the emperor's cult took place during Diocletian's reign: Lepelley, *Cités*, ii. 331–333.

49 CIL 8. 20401; 8. 24521; Lepelley, *Cités*, ii. 16. Leglay, vi–vii, 466 f. believes that eastern cults were not particularly successful in Carthage.

50 Decret, *Christianisme*, 17.

51 Rives, 214–223. The description of the necropolis of Gammarth is provided by Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish symbols in the Greco-Roman period* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953), ii. 63–68. Karen B. Stern, *Inscribing Devotion and Death: Archaeological Evidence for Jewish Populations of North Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 12–15 sketches the history of archaeological excavations of this place.

third century the inspiration for the first great African Christian writer Tertulian for his tractate *Adversus Iudaeos*.⁵²

Already by the beginning of the fourth century, missionaries of Manichaeism became very active in Carthage, which had originated in Iran by Mani only two or three decades earlier. In Africa, Manichaeism was more successful than in other parts of the empire.⁵³ Indeed, it was in Carthage that the first persecutions of this sect took place; the emperor Diocletian addressed his edict declaring the persecutions of Manichaeists to the local proconsul Julian as early as 31st March 302.⁵⁴ This imperial legislation was apparently not particularly successful for a similar edict against the Manichaeists was issued by Theodosius in 382 as part of his religious politics.⁵⁵ In the same years the young Augustine was in Carthage for nine years as a follower of the Manichaeists, who were claiming to be the true form of Christianity.⁵⁶ Later, he devoted great effort to fighting Manichaeism after his baptism and ordination to the priesthood and episcopate in Hippo Regius.⁵⁷ However, the Manichaeists remained in Africa, and in Carthage in particular, strongly present even in the first decades of the fifth century.

1.3 *African Christianity*

The Christians joined in Carthage's religious cocktail in the second century. Christianity arrived in Africa most likely from Egypt and Libya, or from Rome.⁵⁸ The oldest treatise for the evidence of Christianity in Africa is a Latin hagiographical document, *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*. This records the process, held on the 17th July 180 by the proconsul Vigellius Saturninus, against the Christians from the village or townlet Scillium (today's Kasserine) in the interior of Africa Proconsularis.⁵⁹ So, as Christianity reached this far into the

52 Tert. *adv. Jud.* 1. 1f. (CCL 2: 1339).

53 Regarding the circumstances of the arrival of Manichaeism to Africa, see Decret, *Christianisme*, 201–209.

54 François Decret, *L'Afrique manichéenne (IV^e–V^e siècles)* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978): i. 264; Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 2006), 20; Decret, *Christianisme*, 202.

55 CTh. 16. 5. 9 (ed. Mommsen 1529–1530). Aspects of Theodosian antimanichaean legislation are studied by María Victoria Escribano Paño, 'Simulación, abjuración y delación de Maniqueos en África: el testimonio de Agustín', *AnTard* 23 (2015), 383–394.

56 Aug. *conf.* 3–5; *retr.* 1. 16. 1 (CCL 27: 27–72; 57: 51).

57 Augustine's relationship and polemics regarding Manichaeism is mapped out by Volker H. Drecoll, 'Manichaei', in AL 3 (2004–2010), 1132–1159.

58 Victor Saxer, 'Africa', 97.

59 *Act. Scill.* 1 (ed. Musurillo 88).

countryside,⁶⁰ and as Tertullian, the first star of African Christian literature, did not know anything about its African beginnings, it is possible to assume that Christianity had reached Africa at least one generation earlier,⁶¹ perhaps in the first half of the second century. At that time, the Christian community in Carthage and the surrounding towns grew strongly.⁶² Tertullian's cutting tongue was not shy in reminding the proconsul Scapulus in 212 that if he had all the Carthaginian Christians executed, the city would be depopulated: 'What will Carthage itself endure, which you will have to decimate, when every man will recognise his own relatives and companions among them ...? Spare Carthage, if not yourself.'⁶³ Of course he was exaggerating, however, by all accounts the Christian community in Carthage at the beginning of the third century was firmly rooted and thriving well. Like the Jews, the Christians had their own cemetery to bury their dead.⁶⁴ Also, they did not partake in public sacrifices and games to honour pagan gods, however, unlike the Jews, Christianity was not a permitted religion and was considered a 'superstition' (*superstitio*). As is testified by the examples of the martyrs and Tertullian's apologia, the Christians were thus considered to be disturbers of both civil order and the peaceful living together with the gods.

Thus, Christianity partook in this period in dialogue or polemics with other religious groups that were available to the Carthaginians. Among these were also schismatic or heretical Christian groups: Tertullian's writings suggest the presence of Gnostics, especially Valentinians, and also Marcionites.⁶⁵ Tertullian himself later in his life was becoming increasingly sympathetic to the charismatic and rigorist wave originating from Phrygia called Montanism, or the New Prophecy. By all accounts, in the end, he created his own very rigoristic group, which was still being called the Tertullianists as late as the fifth century.⁶⁶

60 Timothy D. Barnes, *Tertullian: a Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 63.

61 Ibiem., 67. The beginnings of Christianity in Africa is summarised also by David Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 9–16.

62 Tert. *Scap.* 2. 10 (CCL 2: 1128). The reasons for the growth of Christianity in the first period are considered by Frend, *Donatist Church*, 94–111.

63 Tert. *Scap.* 5. 2 (CCL 2: 1132).

64 Tert. *Scap.* 3. 1 (CCL 2: 1130).

65 Against these groups, Tertullian wrote the five-volume tractate *Adversus Marcionem* and also the *Adversus Valentinianos*. The tension in the African Church of this period is noted by Frend, *Donatist Church*, 112–124.

66 Aug. *haer.* 86 (CCL 46: 338); Barnes, *Tertullian*, 130–142; Rankin, 41–51; Liliane Ennabli, *Les inscriptions funéraires chrétiennes de la basilique dite de Sainte Monique à Carthage* (Paris—Roma: École française de Rome, 1975), 36.

A half century later, under the bishop Cyprian, the Christian community in Carthage grew to such an extent that, besides the bishop, several presbyters and other ministers in the Church were necessary.⁶⁷ Even before the year 250, there were more than 130 cities in Africa that had their own bishop.⁶⁸ These episcopates were not spread evenly: the greatest number was in the east around Carthage; towards the west and south, on the way to the plateaus, their number decreased.⁶⁹ Already from the third century, these bishops were dealing with difficult issues of the Church in North Africa through synods.⁷⁰ Under Cyprian alone there were seven synods in total.

This was the time when a fundamental test in the form of two persecutions took place under the emperors Decius and Valerian (249–251 and 257–258). Many Christians were tortured to death, although it is probable that a significant number denied their faith during the persecutions and sacrificed to pagan gods, or gained confirmation of such a sacrifice by deceit. The synod assembled in May 251 decided the issue regarding what to do with the transgressors in that each bishop was to decide the conditions of their reception back into the Church.⁷¹ Another synod, on 1st September 256, then decided that the heretics and schismatics needed to be rebaptised for their reception into the Catholic Church, thus standing against Roman practice. These two decisions pointed towards the problems that the African Church was to face in the fourth and fifth centuries.⁷² Even at later times, synods assembled ‘for the good of the Church’⁷³ to solve doctrinal and disciplinary issues.⁷⁴ The character of the decision-making of the African Church was significantly collegial, despite the strong position of Carthage’s bishop.

Cyprian was the first African bishop to be tortured to death, on 14th September 258.⁷⁵ The glory of his martyrdom and the number of his preserved writings guaranteed his enormous popularity in late antiquity, not only towards him but it also helped to develop the prestige and authority of other bishops and

67 It was the bishop and martyr Cyprian who brought great prestige to the bishop’s authority on African soil, see Rives, 294–310.

68 Yvette Duval, ‘Densité et répartition des évêchés dans les provinces africaines au temps de Cyprien’, *MEFRA* 96 (1984), 493–521.

69 Saxer, ‘Africa’, 98.

70 *Cypr. epp.* 56. 4; 59. 10 (CSEL 3/2: 653–655, 677 f.) discusses the councils taking place during his predecessor Agrippinus in 220.

71 *Cypr. epp.* 45; 48; 49 (CSEL 3/2: 599–603, 606–612).

72 *Sent. ep.* (CSEL 3/1. 433–461).

73 *Concilium Hipponense 427* (CCL 149: 250–253).

74 *Conc. Afr.* (CCL 149).

75 Pontius, *v. Cypr.* 19. 1 (ed. Bastiaensen 46–48).

martyrs. African Christians held martyrdom in reverence even more so than in other parts of the Roman Empire. The cult of the martyrs would become typical for the local Church, and the Catholics as well as the Donatists would refer to their reverence for the martyrs after the division of the African Church in the fourth century.⁷⁶

It is worth mentioning here that the quality of Tertullian's and Cyprian's writings exhibit high literary and theological qualities even in these earliest times. Both of these authors can be considered Fathers of the Christian Latin language and also several theological concepts which are utilised even today at least in Western Christianity. African biblical tradition is worthy of respect as well: the oldest Latin translation of the Pauline letters is dated to the end of the second century, having been carried out in Africa; not long afterwards, in the middle of the third century, the Carthaginian bishop Cyprian was employing the generally used, almost official, Latin version of the Scriptures. A very good knowledge of the Bible would become another characteristic of African Christianity; homiletic literature would use exegesis of the Bible as its foundation throughout the whole existence of Christianity in North Africa.

After Cyprian's martyrdom, the Church enjoyed forty years of peace, from Gallien's reign onwards, when Christianity was becoming increasingly attractive for many. Although the Church's legal status was not yet clear, the Church in this period built relatively large buildings even in Africa, which can be called basilicas.⁷⁷ However, in the end the African Church was influenced again in the long term by persecution, the 'great' persecution of the years 303–305, when the emperor Diocletian requested of Christians to hand over their holy books to the civil authorities. In Africa, this was briefer but all the more cruel.⁷⁸ Its fruits were many martyrdoms, however, many bishops and other clergy handed over these books, thus being considered traitors, *traditores*.

The suspicion that also the newly elected and hurriedly ordained bishop of Carthage Caecilianus was a *traditor*, together with other factors, lead to the Numidian primate Secundus of Tigisis calling a synod. This removed Caecilianus and replaced him with the lector Maiorinus.⁷⁹ Even the emperor Con-

76 W.H.C. Frend, 'From Donatist Opposition to Byzantine Loyalism: The Cult of Martyrs in North Africa 350–650', in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa*, ed. A.H. Merrills (Farnham; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004), 259–269 shows how the cult of martyrs would remain as one of the key features of African Christianity up to the Arab invasion in the seventh century.

77 Lepelley, *Cités*, ii. 334.

78 Eus. *h. e.* 8. 6. 10 (GCS 9/2: 752).

79 Optat. *schism. Don.* 1. 19 (CSEL 26: 21); Aug. *ps. c. Don.* 44–46 (CSEL 51: 5); *ep. cath.* 18. 46

stantine sided with Caecilianus' party, wanting to free the clerics in fellowship with Caecilianus from financially very burdensome municipal duties (*municipalia*).⁸⁰ Caecilianus' opponents appealed to Constantine, however, their bishop Maiorinus died in the meantime and was succeeded by the formidable Donatus of *Casae Nigrae*.⁸¹ Caecilianus was supported by the Roman bishop Miltiades, who was delegated by Constantine, and then in 314 also by the Council of Arles.⁸² This led Constantine to the definite decision to support Caecilianus and intervene strictly against the Carthaginian Donatists.⁸³ However, Donatus's party gradually strengthened in Africa and the Catholic party, supported by the emperor's power, did not prevail even after his exile in 347.⁸⁴ During Julian's reign, the exiled Donatist leaders returned in 361 and, during the leadership of Donatus' successor Parmenian, the Donatists were strengthening again until Parmenian's death in 391. Then, a schism occurred between the moderate Donatists, led by Maximian, and one called Primian.⁸⁵ In the following years, the Catholic party strengthened and prevailed under the leadership of the Carthaginian bishop Aurelius and the Hippo Regius bishop Augustine so much as to make the Donatists meet at the conference in Carthage in 411; the result was the emperor's new ban on Donatists, which was more successful than the preceding legislation.⁸⁶ Although traces of Donatism were still visible in the sixth century, the Donatists were beginning to leave the stage.⁸⁷

Thus, both parties were disputing for more than a hundred years regarding which is the true Church of Christ and who truly belongs to this Church. The Donatists desired the Church to be holy and immaculate, and accused the Catholics of being the heirs of those who betrayed the faith during the persecutions and collaborated with state power. One cannot suspect that Catholics desired a holy Church less, however, in such an unsettled atmosphere the theme of the unity of the Church rises to the surface, being a theme that is very

(CSEL 52. 291). The origin of the schism is presented in the classical way by Frend, *Donatist Church*, 1–24.

80 Eus. *h. e.* 10. 7. 1–2 (GCS 9/2: 891).

81 Optat. *schism. Don.* app. 1 (CSEL 26: 185).

82 Optat. *schism. Don.* app. 4 (CSEL 26: 206–208).

83 For a more detailed depiction of the events, see Frend, *Donatist Church*, 141–159.

84 Optat. *schism. Don.* 3. 3, 12; 7. 6 (CSEL 26: 73–77, 99–101); Frend, *Donatist Church*, 176–187.

85 Frend, *Donatist Church*, 213–220.

86 *CTh* 16. 5. 52 (30 Jan 412). Serge Lancel, *Actes de la Conférence de Carthage en 411* (Paris: Cerf, 1972–1991), i. 14–16.

87 Gregor. 1, *ep.* 6. 62 (CCL 140: 440–442) dated to 596; Robert A. Markus, 'The Problem of "Donatism" in the Sixth Century,' in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo. XIX Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma 9–12 maggio 1990* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1991): 159–166.

present in the works of African authors of this period, especially Augustine. It is true that the Catholic side could rely upon the secular powers and their financial and military support during most of the fourth century and especially at the beginning of the fifth.⁸⁸ However, using violence against the Donatists only supported the spirit of martyrdom in them.⁸⁹ On the other side, violence was not absent either, taking the form of fanatic Donatist groups called *Circumcelliones* which committed violence against Catholic people.⁹⁰

The Catholic Church in Africa came out relatively well from the conflict with the Donatists. Significant property was available to her and she could lean on the emperor's legislation and on help from the secular authorities against heretic groups.⁹¹ The economic means enabled the Church to be stabilised and to develop its own organisation and institutions, ranging from building and renewing churches, baptistries, bishops' premises, and monasteries, to charity care for the poor in the form of financial help as well as institutions dedicated to the sick and to pilgrims (*xenodochia*).⁹² Simply put, every African city had its own bishop and their total is estimated between six and seven hundred.⁹³ It is estimated that in Carthage itself in the fifth century there could have been more than twenty basilicas belonging not only to the Catholics but also to other Christian groups.⁹⁴ The number of clergy of Carthage itself totalled five hundred persons.⁹⁵

However, paganism was in not too difficult a situation either. In Africa and also in the capital Carthage in the first half of the fifth century, paganism held a notably strong position despite Constantine and his sons having granted Christianity many privileges and property⁹⁶ at the beginning of the fourth century, and then at the end of the fourth century Theodosius and Honorius had led a systematic campaign against paganism accompanied by the destruction of pagan temples. It was the aristocracy who especially clung to the pagan

88 Eus. *h. e.* 10. 6. 1–5 (GCS Eus. 11/2: 890).

89 See e.g. the texts translated by Maureen A. Tilley, *Donatist Martyr Stories: The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1996).

90 W.H.C. Frend, 'Circoncellioni', in *NDPAC* 1 (2006): 1040–1042.

91 Isola, *Cristiani*, 28; Decret, *Christianisme*, 240 f.

92 González Salinero, *Poder*, 97–99.

93 Duval, 'Densité', 493–521.

94 A list of these buildings and their descriptions based especially on literary sources is provided by Liliane Ennabli, *Carthage: une métropole chrétienne du IV^e à la fin du VII^e siècle* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1997), 17–43.

95 Vict. Vit. 3. 34 (ed. Lancel 192 f.); Isola, *Cristiani*, 34.

96 Constantine's donations to the African church are mapped out by Anna Leone, 'Clero, proprietà, cristianizzazione delle campagne nel Nord Africa tardoantico: *status quaestionis*', *AnTard* 14 (2006), 97 f.

cults. The difficult relationships between pagans and Christians are illustrated well by the events connected with the conversion of the deserted temple of the goddess Caelestis in Carthage to a Christian church named to honour the reigning emperor: *basilica Honoriana*. This took place in the presence of the young Quodvultdeus, perhaps at Easter 407/8.⁹⁷ However, the reaction of and protests by Carthage's pagans took place. It is possible that the tribune Ursus was wary of fulfilling the pagan prophecy regarding the return of the pagan cult to this church and later managed to achieve the razing to the ground of this once temple, now church in 417/421 and converted it into a cemetery.⁹⁸ This wariness, together with the bishops being perturbed regarding issues connected with pagan traditions rooted deeply in the social and cultural life of the African people, witnessed to the strength of these Roman pagan traditions still in the fifth century.⁹⁹

One might even say that the pagan ways of thinking and acting were preserved by many Carthaginians (and Africans) who accepted Christianity only superficially. Those who came to the Church often remained attached to the pleasures offered by a rich life, and its pleasures even after their baptism, including the games and the theatre.¹⁰⁰ The 'old' way of thinking no doubt continued to influence the religious life of the city. The Christian community had already lost much of its original enthusiasm which we can see in the ancient martyrological texts. This is illustrated well by Augustine's sermons delivered during the days of games (*munus*). For the Carthaginians' passion for the games in the circus and the theatre was enjoyed also by Christians there. Thus, the bishop of Hippo criticises that on the day of the circus races they did not come to church.¹⁰¹ The fact that many Christians regularly partook in the games is also shown by the canons of the Council of Carthage of 401, which did not criticise them much: it only required these games not to take place on Sundays and Christian feasts.¹⁰²

Thus, the religious situation of northern Africa, and especially its metropolis Carthage, was not at all monotonous. During the first quarter of the fifth century, Catholic Christianity became the dominant religious power, however, other religious streams and also Christian groups regarded as heretical or schis-

97 René Braun in SC 101: 72; 102: 575, n. 575. The pagan temple was deserted perhaps somewhat earlier, in 399: see Ennabli, *Carthage*, 35.

98 L 3. 38. 44 (CCL 60: 185f.); Ennabli, *Carthage*, 36.

99 González Salinero, *Poder*, 51.

100 Lepelley, *Cités*, ii. 46.

101 Aug. *en. Ps.* 80. 2; 147. 7 (CCL 39: 1121; 40: 2144).

102 *Reg. eccl. Carth. can.* 61 (CCL 149: 197).

matic were thriving. Thus, with the arrival of the Vandals, followers of Arian Christianity, and their conquest of Africa after 429, the already difficult religious situation became even more complicated.

2 The Barbarian Invasions

'Now while Honorius was holding imperial power in the West, barbarians took possession of his land.'¹⁰³ Thus, the historian Procopius described in the sixth century the fundamental change that had taken place a century earlier. Although Odoacer's removal of Romulus Augustulus from the throne in 476, the fall of Rome, and the growth of successor kingdoms were still decades away, historians today consider the beginning of the fifth century and Honorius' reign to be a critical moment for Rome of late antiquity. By all accounts, the reason for this crisis and the final fall of Rome is not merely the advancing 'barbarians'. Perhaps much greater 'merit' is had by the inner discord of the Romans themselves. Civil wars, contests for imperial power, and the preference of particular interests before the general welfare led to the neglect of border protection as well as underestimating the invaders' military powers. Indeed, this reasoning has already been presented by contemporary historians.¹⁰⁴

Those living in the Roman Empire during Honorius' reign (395–423) might not necessarily have perceived the situation in such a dramatic way for no drama was appearing; it seemed as if everything was under control. The whole of the Mediterranean Sea was from their point of view still *mare nostrum*—'our sea', enabling lively cultural exchange and trade amongst the Roman provinces on its shores. Barbarians were not strangers for Romans, and they did not frighten them. Romans were used to barbarians gradually settling in Roman lands and the barbarians knew that they were arriving with a Roman invitation. The Romans had used them since the third century for border defence and for the colonisation of border lands. German tribes including the Vandals, who are the focus of this chapter, provided their soldiers as early as the third century for the use of the Roman army and for the defence of Roman borders.¹⁰⁵ The

¹⁰³ Procop. 3. 2. 1 (ed. Dewing 8).

¹⁰⁴ A.H.M. Jones, *The Decline of the Ancient World* (New York: Routledge 1966), 368; Walter A. Goffart, 'The Theme of "The Barbarian Invasions" in Late Antique and Modern Historiography', in *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E.K. Chrysos and A. Schwarcz (Wien—Köln: Böhlau 1989), 87–107.

¹⁰⁵ Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire, from the First Century AD to the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976), 20–23, 27.

Romans had the experience that these warriors would be Romanised within one or two generations. One might notice that some of them managed to attain a high position, even at the emperor's court. For example, Stilicho, a half-Vandal, married Theodosius' niece Serena and between 395 and 408, as a *magister militum*, he was the highest representative of the west Roman army and a regent of the young emperor Honorius and in 400 and 405 became a consul.¹⁰⁶ Soon afterwards, Ardaburius and his son Aspar, who had been sent by Theodosius II in 425 to lead the army against the usurper Joannes, reached the highest Roman offices. Thus, for fifth century Romans the presence of influential barbarians, often of the Arian religion, was nothing unusual or alarming.

However, from the final quarter of the fourth century, the invasions of German tribes into Roman lands increased and the Romans stopped losing their military good fortune. A dramatic moment arrived with the crushing defeat of the emperor Valentinian and the Roman army by the Goths at Adrianopolis in 378. Not even the inhabitants of the imperial residence, the city of Milan, could have missed this. The Milanese bishop Ambrose described how many people were deported into slavery, or a high ransom was demanded for them. The image of fleeing Romans which flooded, for example, northern Italy must have been powerful and very burdensome for the local economy as well as for the feeling of Roman 'pride'.¹⁰⁷ Without doubt, such invasions might have been perceived as signs of the end of time—the bishop talks about barbarian tribes of Arianic Christianity as a biblical Gog and Magog.¹⁰⁸ Despite this, the Romans were able to perceive these invasions and catastrophes in a much more individual way than we now do, having a distance of many centuries. There was no reason for panic because similar events, civil wars, usurpers' campaigns, inclement weather, and epidemics all belonged to the atmosphere of the world of antiquity, which in the reality of everyday life was much less romantic and attractive than how it sometimes seems to us now.¹⁰⁹

106 However, Stilicho was accused after his death of neglecting the barbarian invasion of the Rhine in 406 and was considered a traitor: see Marcellinus, *com. chron.* 408 (MGH AA II. 69); *chron. Gal.* a. 352. 55 (MGH AA 9: 652).

107 Lellia Ruggini, *Economia e società nell'«Italia annonaria». Rapporti fra agricoltura e commercio dal IV al VI secolo d. C.* (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1961), 81.

108 Giuseppe Visonà, "Gog iste gothus est". L'ombra di Adrianopoli su Ambrogio di Milano', *StAmbr* 5 (2011), 133–168.

109 Averil Cameron, *Later Roman Empire, AD 284–430* (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1993), 138; Whitaker 1995: 15.

However, among the disasters a shock came. In 410 Alaric plundered Rome. This shook the general idea that Rome was eternal and undefeatable.¹¹⁰ *Urbs aeterna* was conquered—this was something completely unimaginable for the contemporary people. The popular objections against Christianity became intensive especially following Alaric's conquering of Rome. For pagans, this event became an opportunity to question Christianity as the new Roman religion: they dusted off the ancient argument that it was caused by the people neglecting the cult of the pagan gods, who were to protect Rome for millennia. The Christians had to be prepared to face such objections. 'The faith of the Christians is laughed at by the godless and by unbelievers,' witnesses Augustine.¹¹¹ "Peter's body lies in Rome," people are saying, "Paul's body lies in Rome, Lawrence's body lies in Rome, the bodies of other holy martyrs lie in Rome; and Rome is grief-stricken, and Rome is being devastated, afflicted, crushed, burnt; death stalks the streets in so many ways, by hunger, by pestilence, by the sword. Where are the memorials of the apostles?"¹¹² But the Christians themselves had to come to terms with the idea that such events take place even under the protection of the one God. Augustine reveals such thinking of his believers in one of his sermons: 'I can already see what you are saying in your heart: "Look, it's during Christian times that Rome is being afflicted, or rather has been afflicted and burnt. Why in Christian times?"'¹¹³ Therefore, the Christians facing the fifth century disasters had to come to terms with the idea that the Christian Roman Empire was not the coming Kingdom of God.¹¹⁴ 'But why is Rome falling amid the sacrifices of the Christians?'¹¹⁵ Augustine's sermons as well as his monumental work *The City of God* show an attempt to existentially

110 This is witnessed by, for example, Augustine's sermons and his *opus magnum*, the 22 books of *De civitate dei*.

111 Aug. s. 113A = s. Denis 24. 1 (MA 1: 141): *Christianorum fides, quae ab impiis et infidelibus irridetur*.

112 Aug. s. 296. 6 (MA 1: 404f.; tr. Rotelle 206): *Iacet Petri corpus Romae, dicunt homines, iacent Pauli corpus Romae, Laurentii corpus Romae, aliorum martyrum sanctorum corpora iacent Romae; et misera est Roma, et vastatur Roma; affligitur; conteritur; incenditur; tot strages mortis fiunt, per famem, per pestem, per gladium. Ubi sunt memoriae apostolorum?*

113 Aug. s. 296. 9 (MA 1: 407; tr. Rotelle 208): *Ecce temporibus christianis Roma affligitur, aut afflicta est, et incensa est; quare temporibus christianis?*

114 See, for example, Augustine's correspondence with Volusianus, *epp.* 136–137; Theodore S. De Bruyn, 'Ambivalence Within a "Totalizing Discourse": Augustine's Sermons on the Sack of Rome', *JES* 1 (1993), 405–421; David Vopřada, "Senectus mundi." Křesťané tváří v tvář krizi. Cypriánův spis Demetrianovi a Augustinovy promluvy po Alarichově dobytí Říma', in *Kříže a kairos*, ed. J. Bednaříková, D. Bouma, and J. Hojda (Červený Kostelec: Pavel Mervart, 2010), 40–52.

115 Aug. s. 81. 9 (PL 38: 505; tr. Rotelle 365): *Sed quare inter sacrificia Christianorum perit Roma?*

overcome the situation and witness to the existential insecurity remaining with the ancient person even with the arrival of Christianity.

Despite this, some areas and—as we have seen—among these, especially Africa, remained spared from these catastrophes up to the end of the 420s and enjoyed relative prosperity. Augustine himself viewed the world then with anxiety: ‘The world now is just like an oil press; it’s under pressure ... Sometimes pressure is applied in the world; for example, famine, war, want, death, poverty, as epidemic, robbery, greed; pressure on the poor brings unrest to the cities—we see it all happening.’¹¹⁶ Africa was also afflicted by the disaster of 410 because many Romans repaired to there from an Italy endangered by the Barbarians. Despite people’s anxiety, Africa remained a safe haven, where the richest Romans congregated and among these were also Melania and Pinnianus.¹¹⁷

Again, it was conflicts of power between the Roman elite that led to dramatic and irreversible changes. Bonifatius, instituted as *comes Africae*, became involved in plotting and a power struggle between the highest Roman army officials; Valentinian III sent his commander Sigisvultus to solve the situation and stop Bonifatius. In preparation for civil war, Bonifatius began negotiating with possible allies, amongst these being the Vandals, who were settled geographically nearby in Hispania, and separated from Africa by a not particularly wide strip of sea.¹¹⁸

2.1 *The Origin of the Vandals*

The Vandals as a nation became a synonym for destroyers, violent criminals, and, in general, non-culturally-acting individuals.¹¹⁹ They did not have anyone to sing their heroic songs and show how remarkable was the march of a nation, who had marched over a sea in order to find a home in the land considered to be the promised land by the whole world of antiquity. The understanding of the Vandals, which is introduced by the main sources for our learning of the Vandals’ life in Africa, is (with the exception of Procopius) that of the African clergy,

116 Aug. s. 113A = s. *Denis* 24. 11 (MA 1: 151, tr. Rotelle 179): *Modo mundus sic est quomodo et torcular; in pressuris est ... Pressura fit aliquando in mundo: verbi gratia, fames, bellum, inopia, caritas, egestas, mortalitas, rapina, avaritia; pressuræ pauperum, labores civitatum sunt: ista videmus.*

117 Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 292.

118 Robert A. Markus, ‘Bonifatius comes Africae’, in AL 1 (1986–1994): 653; González Salinero, *Poder*, 77.

119 ‘Vandalism’ as a term was established during the French Revolution, created by the bishop de Blois Grégoire in relationship to the revolutionary National Convention, see also Andrew H. Merrills, ‘The Origins of “Vandalism”’, *IJCT* 16/2 (2009), 155–175.

who, in their office, were concerned with the salvation of the souls entrusted to them that were inflicted by injustice from heretical barbarians.¹²⁰ The almost romantic savagedom of the Vandals is somewhat attractive for Procopius, in the fact that it does not allow man to come to a standstill in comfort, motionlessness, and self-satisfaction.

The first fragmentary mentions regarding the Vandals can be found as early as the first century. Amongst five Germanic tribes, Pliny mentioned, in the first place, the *Vandili*, consisting of four sub-tribes called the *Burgodioni*, *Varinnae*, *Charini*, and *Gutones*.¹²¹ Similarly, Tacitus also described the *Vandili* to be one of the key components of the Germans.¹²² A century later, Dio mentioned an episode from Marcus Aurelius' campaign against the Marcomanni dated 171/172, when the *consularis* Cornelius Clemens was resolving conflicts between local tribes settled in Dacia. One of them was called the Astingi, led by two kings named Rausus and Raptus.¹²³ The family leading the Vandals received the title Astingi at the beginning of the fifth century and thus a consensus has been reached that these 'Astingi' denote the Vandals.¹²⁴ Another account dates later, to 270, when a Vandal gang crossed the Roman border on the Danube near Aquincum, not far from today's Budapest.¹²⁵ Despite a lack of sources, it is assumed that the Vandals, perhaps together with other groups, occupied the cultural area defined by archaeologists as 'Przeworsk culture' that spread from Silesia to the upper Tisza River.¹²⁶ However, politically they remained a completely uninteresting entity.¹²⁷ They reappear after the abovementioned

120 The overview of historical sources for understanding the history of the Vandals is offered by Andrew H. Merrills, 'Vandals, Romans and Berbers: Understanding Late Antique North Africa', in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 19–24. The *status quaestionis* of the research regarding the Vandals is summarised by Philipp von Rummel, 'Zum Stand der afrikanischen Vandalenforschung', *AnTard* 11 (2004), 13–20.

121 Plin. *nat. hist.* 4. 99 (ed. Rackham 194–196).

122 Tac. *Germ.* 2. It is natural to ask here whether Pliny's and Tacitus's *Vandili* denote 'our' Vandals: see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 59. With regards to both authors also mentioning the *Suebi/Suevi* among the tribes, attested also in the fifth century, I believe that this can be assumed with a certain probability.

123 Cass. Dio 72. 11 f.

124 Merrills, 'Vandals, Romans, and Berbers', 27.

125 Zos. 1. 48 (ed. Paschoud i. 41); Alaric Watson, *Aurelian and the Third Century* (London: Routledge, 1999), 49 f., 216–220.

126 Courtois, 11–37; Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 4–6; Pohl, 33. Procopius 3. 3. 1 (ed. Dewing 22) supposed that the Vandals originated from Maeotic (or Azov) Lake and regarded them among the Goth nations.

127 Merrills, 'Vandals, Romans, and Berbers', 33.

battle at Hadrianopolis, when Jerome mentions them in his letter to the bishop Heliodorus of Altinum in 396 among other barbarian groups—the Goths, the Sarmats, the Quadi, the Alans, the Huns, and the Marcomanni—contributing to tension in the Balkans.¹²⁸ Probably, the Vandals at this time comprised of a tribe or a union consisting of smaller sub-tribes that might not have even spoken one language.¹²⁹

Regardless of the Vandals' previous history, the watershed arrived with the last day of the year 406 when a great number of Alans, Suebi, and Vandals crossed the Rhine somewhere between Worms and Mainz and began to plunder Gaul.¹³⁰ This invasion paradoxically remained more on the periphery of political interest. As a significantly greater danger was considered to be the invasion of Constantine III from Britain to Gaul, when this usurper attempted to seize power following the example of his predecessors.¹³¹ Neither the emperor Honorius nor other pretenders to political power were particularly interested in groups of barbarian warriors. This armed conflict of Roman factions forced the Vandals and other tribes to advance to the south.¹³² Thus, in the autumn of 409 the barbarians crossed the Pyrenees without any great resistance.¹³³ Individual groups divided different Iberian provinces and subdued the Roman inhabitants. The north-west part of the peninsula, Gallaecia (today's Galicia) devolved to the Hasdingi Vandals, while the southern part, the province Baetica (today's Andalusia)¹³⁴ was transferred to the Silingi Vandals. These Silingi were destroyed by the Visigoths in 417–418, the Roman *foederati* led by King Vallia, and also the Alans were significantly weakened and fled for

128 Hier. *ep.* 60. 16 (CSEL 54: 570f.).

129 Courtois, 50; Pohl, 32.

130 Prosper *chron.* 1230 (MGH AA 9: 465); Merrills, 'Vandals, Romans, and Berbers', 35 f.

131 Oros. 7. 42. 1 (CSEL 5: 555).

132 Prosper, *chron.* 1232 (MGH AA 9: 465).

133 Hydat. 267. 15 (ed. Burgess 80). The Romans deemed that the reason for their success was betrayal and plotting within their side rather than the military success of the advancing barbarians: see Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 160.

134 Hydat. 297. 17 (ed. Burgess 82). J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, 'Gens into regnum: The Vandals', in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, and W. Pohl (Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2003), 61 f. believes that the Hasdingi and the Silingi split apart early in their prehistory and rejoined only during the invasion of Gaul in 406. He concludes that it was characteristic for the Germanic tribes that several 'sub-tribes' formed shared 'Vandalicity' (p. 62), this should have been also the case of the Vandals. Merrills, 'Vandals, Romans, and Berbers', 47 opines that the Vandals did not comprise of a unified political entity and that the distinction into the Hasdingi and the Silingi was only a few years old.

protection to the Hasdingi.¹³⁵ However, the Roman army drove them out in 420 to Baetica in the southernmost part of the peninsula. There was only one reason why they were spared a catastrophe—that the Goths deserted their pre-battle ally, the Roman commander.¹³⁶ Thus, the Hasdingi Vandals, despite expectations and an insignificant number, became the greatest threat in a few years to this part of the Roman Empire. In this period, they became the strongest non-Roman power of the Pyrenaic peninsula.¹³⁷

In 425 the Vandals invaded the Balearic islands, plundered Hispania, and invaded Mauritania.¹³⁸ Three years later, in 428, the king Gunderic,¹³⁹ the son of the king Godigisel, who had led the Vandals across the Rhine and presumably had fallen in ‘the great battle with the Franks’,¹⁴⁰ ‘captured Hispalis, but soon after, when with overweening impiety he tried to lay hands on the church of that very city, by the will of God he was seized by a demon and died. His brother Gaiseric succeeded him as king. There is a story which some relate that Gaiseric had converted from the orthodox faith to the Arian heresy, thereby becoming an apostate.’¹⁴¹

This Geiseric (or Gaiseric, Genseric, in Vandalic most likely Genderix) plays a key role in the following act. Jordanes describes him as a man of middle-build, limping after a fall from a horse. He depicts him at the same time as a spiritual and taciturn person. According to him, Geiseric despised luxury and was characterised by not only a furious character but also the ability to foresee and set particular groups of people against each other.¹⁴² The first great act of Geiseric was sailing the Vandals and Alans across to Africa.

2.2 *The Invasion of Africa*

It is of no surprise that amongst the tension in Hispania the gaze of the Vandals—similar to those of Alaric and Valia earlier¹⁴³—began turning to the blossoming Africa. *Comes* Bonifatius seized it in the first half of the 420s, with a

135 Hydat. 299. 24 (ed. Burgess 86). Later Vandal kings in Africa would claim the title ‘King of the Andals and the Vandals’: see Vict. Vit. 2. 39 (ed. Lancel 139).

136 Hydat. 200. 28 (ed. Burgess 86–88).

137 See, for example, Aug. *ep.* 11* (CSEL 88: 51–70); Merrills, ‘Vandals, Romans, and Berbers’, 46f.; Pohl, 37. The state of research regarding the fortunes of the Vandals in Hispania is summarised by Javier Arce, ‘Los Vandalos in Hispania (409–429 a. D.)’, *AnTard* 10 (2002), 75–86.

138 Hydat. 301. 1 (ed. Burgess 89).

139 Sometimes denoted as Guntharic.

140 Gregor. Tur. *hist.* 2. 9 (PL 71: 205).

141 Hydat. 301. 4 (ed. Burgess 89f.).

142 Jordan. *Get.* 33 (PL 69: 1274f.).

143 Jordan. *Get.* 30. 156–158 (MGH AA 5: 98f.) depicts that Alaric was put off from the inten-

military power that was, however, lessened by the usurper Joannes in 424, who reigned in Ravenna for a short time in 423–425. Tension continued between Bonifatius and the emperor's court and Bonifatius refused to obey the command of the emperor Valentinian III to sail with the army to Italy. Following three unsuccessful commanders, the Gothic commander Sigisvultus started an expedition against Bonifatius in 427, followed by barbarian powers supporting him a year later.¹⁴⁴ There could not have been a better moment for the Vandals' invasion into Africa with such a failure of the Roman elites taking place.¹⁴⁵

Mastering sea-sailing was the key for the whole enterprise. Roman emperors aimed to prevent the barbarians from mastering this art and in 419 there was issued a ban, punishable by death, for training the barbarians in sea-sailing.¹⁴⁶ Despite this, the Vandals acquired this key knowledge of shipbuilding and sea-sailing during their stay in Hispania, profiting from this throughout the whole of the fifth century during which they became a terror of the whole of the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁴⁷

However, according to historians of the period, at the end of May 429 an apparently insignificant group of Vandals, led by the king Geiseric, set out in search of a new home on the other side of the Gibraltar channel.¹⁴⁸ The invasion of Mauritania and Africa was postponed by the Suebic leader Heremigarius, with his army plundering the land of the Iberian peninsula, whom Geiseric began to pursue. Only after Heremigarius' unexpected death—according to Hydatius, he was thrown into the river Ana near Emerita (today's Merida) shortly after sinning against the martyr Eulalia—and the defeat of his soldiers, Geiseric finally set out across the sea for Africa.¹⁴⁹ Geiseric set out for Africa not only with warriors but also with old men, young men, and children, slaves and their masters, and of course also with women. Their total number, including not only warriors but also the elderly, women, and children, was 80,000 accord-

tion of sailing across to Africa by a view of several sunken ships; Oros. 6. 43 (CSEL 5. 561f.) describes the attempt of the Visigoth king Vallia in 416.

144 Procopius 3. 3. 15–23 (ed. Dewing 26–28).

145 This is after all noted already by Aug. *ep.* 220. 7 (CSEL 57: 436). Some argue that the Vandals were invited to Africa by Bonifatius himself: see Procopius 3. 3. 22–27 (ed. Dewing 28–30); Stuart Irwin Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta: A Biographical Essay* (Chicago: UCP, 1968), 245; Markus, 'Bonifatius', 653; González Salinero, *Poder*, 77. However, this theory was refuted many times: see Pohl, 51.

146 CI 9. 25.

147 Emile-Félix Gautier, *Genséric roi des Vandales* (Paris: Payot, 1951), 109.

148 This date is given based on Hydat. 302. 5 (ed. Burgess 90), but other authors, for example, Prosper, *epit.* 1295 (MGH AA 9: 472) and Cassiodorus, *chron.* 1215 (MGH AA 11: 156) give the year 427 for the invasion of Africa, or others the year 428: see *chron. pasch.* (CSHB 11: 581).

149 Hydat. 302. 5 (ed. Burgess 90).

ing to Victor of Vita, however, the number of warriors was presumably lower.¹⁵⁰ Thus, this was not a mere raiding expedition but an intention to relocate the whole tribe to a land where they could prosper. Together with the Vandals and the Alans, members of other groups partook in this event, especially Goths and probably also some Roman inhabitants from Hispania.¹⁵¹

When they landed in the province of Mauritania Tingitana, they continued along the coast to the east and, with the exception of such a large city as Sirte or Hippo Regius, they did not meet any resistance.¹⁵² According to Procopius, they battled with Bonifatius, with success.¹⁵³ Galla Placidia sent reinforcements to Africa, led by Aspar; these joined with Bonifatius, however, even this attempt to stop the Vandals advancing was futile and ended with the defeat of the Romans.¹⁵⁴ Due to internal conflicts, Roman military power in Africa was weakened to such an extent that the army was not able to effectively protect against the Vandals advancing.¹⁵⁵ Contemporary chroniclers pointed out the connection between the Roman inability to join forces divided by the civil war and the success of the Vandal conquerors of Africa.¹⁵⁶ Thus, the Vandals held the upper hand over the local people and in principle were able to do whatever they wanted without any fear of firm retribution from the Roman side.¹⁵⁷

In May or June 430, the Vandals besieged Bonifatius and his Gothic *foederati* in the city Hippo Regius;¹⁵⁸ the main person of the history of the African Church of the fifth century, the bishop of Hippo Augustine, died during this siege.¹⁵⁹ In the end, after fourteen months of being besieged, the city fell into Geiseric's hands.¹⁶⁰ Bonifatius left Hippo and soon afterwards died in Italy from

150 Vict. Vit. 1. 2 (ed. Lancel 98). Procopius 3. 5. 18–20 (ed. Dewing 52) regards that the Vandals exaggerated their own numbers. Liebeschuetz, '*Gens into Regnum*', 68 estimates that the Vandals in Africa were faced by an army of 10–15 thousand Roman soldiers, and the number of the fighting Vandals could have been similar. Regarding this issue, see also Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, 221–234; Gil Egea, 189–192; Pohl, 38.

151 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 4 (LCPM 45: 272); Merrills, 'Vandals, Romans, and Berbers', 3.

152 Courtois, 38–58, 155–162; Gil Egea, 179–193.

153 Procopius 3. 3. 35 f. (ed. Dewing 32 f.).

154 Procopius 3. 3. 31–35 (ed. Dewing 32 f.); Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, ii. 1426. It is, however, possible that Procopius relied too much on the heroic memories of the Vandals themselves and thus some believe that the success of the whole invasion consisted in the fact that they never properly encountered Roman opposition: see Gautier, 167.

155 Conant, 19.

156 Cassiodorus, *chron.* 1214 f. (MGH AA II: 156).

157 Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 165.

158 Vict. Vit. 1. 10 (ed. Lancel 101); Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 4 (LCPM 45: 272); Courtois, 162.

159 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 29–31 (LCPM 45: 280–312); Prosper, *chron.* 2. 744 (PL 51: 596).

160 Courtois, 163; Holmes Van Mater Dennis, *Hippo Regius from the Earliest Times to the Arab*

the aftereffects of an injury incurred in battle with Aetius.¹⁶¹ Geiseric probably had the city walls pulled down, however, the city was presumably not destroyed or deserted;¹⁶² by contrast, for the following decade it was the capital of the provinces conquered by Geiseric.¹⁶³

Victor of Vita and other authors depict in this early phase the cruelty of the Vandals, who afflicted the thriving province not only by destroying property, gardens, and towns but also by murdering the local people.¹⁶⁴ From the very beginning, this Vandal 'fury' did not overlook church buildings, and 'basilicas of the saints, cemeteries', and, according to Victor, the conquerors devoted special attention to burning monasteries.¹⁶⁵ Victor also vividly depicts various forms of torture used to force bishops and other significant clerics to disclose to the Vandals where their property and that of the Church were hidden.¹⁶⁶ Some basilicas that were not destroyed were handed over to be used for the Arian cult.¹⁶⁷

There is no doubt that there is a just foundation for the majority of the disreputability that the Vandals received for such manners: archaeological finds from this period confirm the destruction of churches.¹⁶⁸ It is also confirmed that Victor's depiction of the Vandals' cruelty does not have the character of propaganda and probably is not tinged much by the number of abused nuns that was so high that even fifteen years after these events the Roman bishop Leo suggested to the local bishops to create in the Church a special category besides widows and virgins for these women.¹⁶⁹ The level of Vandal violence fulfils all the criteria of the term 'barbarian', albeit some current researchers interested in the Vandals in Africa are attempting to moderate this image.¹⁷⁰ Geiseric can be considered a genius of a commander but it is hardly surprising that for the systematic character of the violence directed towards the local

Conquest (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1970), 58; Gil Egea, 223 f.; Andreas Schwarcz, 'The Settlement of the Vandals in North Africa', in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 52.

161 Prosper, *chron.* 2. 744 (PL 51: 595); Marcellinus, *chron.* 432 (MGH AA 11: 78).

162 The deserting of the city is discussed by Procop. 3. 3. 31 (ed. Dewing 32), however, the archaeological findings have not confirmed this testimony: see Van Mater Dennis, 59.

163 Courtois, 326; González Salinero, *Poder*, 79.

164 Vict. Vit. 1. 3, 7 f. (ed. Lancel 98–100); Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 5 (LCPM 45: 272–224).

165 Vict. Vit. 1. 4 (ed. Lancel 98).

166 Vict. Vit. 1. 5 f., 10 (ed. Lancel 99 and 101).

167 Vict. Vit. 1. 9 (ed. Lancel 100 f.).

168 Isola, *Cristiani*, 39 provides examples of the church in *Rusganiae* (today Bordj el Bahri), in *Thelepte* (today Medinet el Kdima) and cases when Geiseric destroyed churches also outside of Africa (Ostia, Sevilla).

169 Leo I, *ep.* 12. 8; 12. 11 (PL 54: 653–655).

170 Reasons for the credibility of the contemporary sources discussing Vandal violence in comparison with the mild attitude of C. Courtois is summarised by Isola, *Cristiani*, 39–45.

people he gained the reputation of an antichrist, who in everything stood up to the Church and which is also noticeable in Quodvultdeus's discourses.¹⁷¹

2.3 Carthage Captured

According to the agreement contracted in Hippo between the emperor Valentinian III and Geiseric on 11th February 435, the Romans ceded to the Vandals a part of Africa to settle and the Vandals were to pay the Romans a tribute in the form of grain.¹⁷² Presumably, Geiseric had to contract this agreement for tactical reasons. The Romans were still holding Carthage, which could have been used as a base for campaigns against the Vandals. Technically speaking, the Vandals became allies (*foederati*) of Rome and Geiseric was accepted as an ally leader and, in effect, became a king.¹⁷³

However, four years later, Geiseric broke this contract and on 13th October 439 the Vandals unexpectedly and without resistance captured Carthage. Together with this, they also seized the richest area of neighbouring Byzacena and Africa Proconsularis.¹⁷⁴ Hydatius comments on the conquest of Carthage, as usual, very laconically: 'After taking Carthage by a great stratagem on 19th October [439], King Geiseric invaded all of Africa.'¹⁷⁵ Carthage became the new capital of the Vandal empire.

The loss of Africa was crucial for Rome, psychologically as well as economically. People were convinced at that time that Africa formed a whole third of the world;¹⁷⁶ furthermore, it was regarded as the richest Roman province, providing for the city of Rome and its army with grain and other supplies.¹⁷⁷ After the fall of Carthage, Rome was able to rely only on tax income in principle from Italy alone, which meant maintaining the army was becoming increasingly difficult.¹⁷⁸

However, the immediate consequences of conquering Africa directly affected the people of the African provinces. After conquering Carthage, Gei-

171 TB2 1. 2; 1. 7; 5. 13 (CCL 60: 473, 477).

172 Prosper, *epit.* 1321 (MGH AA 9: 474f.); Cassiodorus, *chron.* 1225 (MGH AA 11: 156); Procopius 3. 4. 13 (ed. Dewing 36–38); Courtois, 169; Barnwell, 116.

173 González Salinero, *Poder*, 79.

174 Prosper, *chron.* 2. 746 (PL 51: 597); Marcellinus, *chron.* 439 (MGH AA 11: 80); Courtois, 171; Gil Egea, 228f.

175 Hydat. 304. 15 (ed. Burgess 94): *Carthagine magna fraude decepta die XIII kl. Nouembris omnem Africam rex Gaisericus inuadit.*

176 Marcellinus, *chron.* 439 (MGH AA 11: 80).

177 Richard Cromwell, *Late Roman Field Army* (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publ., 1998), 44.

178 Ibidem, 49.

seric confiscated the property of a significant majority of the senators, letting them sail to Italy. Many other landowners were exiled and their property passed on to the Vandals.¹⁷⁹ With regards to how rich the Carthaginian aristocracy was, this amounted to no small change. The lands in the province Zeugitana and Africa Proconsularis were given to the warriors, while the king and his sons kept significant areas in Numidia, Byzacena, Abaritana, and Gaetulia, to be used by the king to continue rewarding his faithful.¹⁸⁰ However, not all rich Romans were met by the same fate—despite significant confiscations, rich landowners remained in Africa.¹⁸¹ It seems that the Vandals rather lived in rural estates and villas than in cities.¹⁸² The conquering of Carthage also meant a temporary suspension of the education for which Carthage was renowned in antiquity.¹⁸³ The bishop Quodvultdeus and his clergy were sat naked in boats in a poor state and exiled to Campania, and all the churches within the city walls, including the bishop's church, called *basilica restituta*, along with the basilicas of the martyrs, were handed over for the use of the Arians.¹⁸⁴

In 441 the eastern emperor Theodosius undertook an unsuccessful campaign against the Vandals. This, as well as another campaign, however, was shipwrecked on the discord and disagreements of the commanders.¹⁸⁵ After these military conflicts, diplomacy took place and in 442 a new agreement was contracted between Geiseric and Valentinian III, rendering the richest African provinces Byzacena and Africa Proconsularis to Geiseric while to the Romans there remained only devastated provinces, that is, the three provinces creating Mauritania and a part of Numidia.¹⁸⁶ Thus, Geiseric became the first fully independent barbarian ruler on Roman land.¹⁸⁷

179 Vict. Vit. 1. 12 (ed. Lancel 102). At least part of them, however, was able to return later and probably even obtain their property back at least partially: (Ps.-)Ferrandus, *v. Fulg.* 1. 4 (CCL 91F: 158f.); Courtois, 300.

180 Vict. Vit. 1. 13 (ed. Lancel 102); Procopius 3. 5. 11–15 (ed. Dewing 50).

181 *Tablettes Albertini, actes privés de l'époque vandale*, ed. C. Courtois et al. (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1952).

182 Procopius 4. 6. 9 (ed. Dewing 256). The scattering of the Vandals over the rural estates as a result of their confiscations is shown also by Yves Modéran, 'L'établissement territorial des Vandales en Afrique', *AnTard* 10 (2003), 87–122.

183 Salvian. *gub.* 7. 16. 68 (SC 220: 478–480).

184 Vict. Vit. 1. 15f. (ed. Lancel 103f.).

185 Prosper, *chron.* 748 (PL 51: 599); Isidor, *hist.* 75 (PL 83: 1087f.); Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in the Late Antiquity AD 395–600* (London—New York: Routledge, 2011), 37.

186 Cassiodorus, *chron.* 1347 (MGH AA 11: 156); François Martroye, *Géneric: La conquête vandale en Afrique et la destruction de l'empire d'occident* (Paris, Hachette, 1907), 134n; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, ii. 190.

187 Courtois, 173; Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 40.

Nevertheless, not even this contract was enough for Geiseric. The Vandals did not limit themselves to the land of Africa. Their fleet controlled the western Mediterranean and no coast was safe from their raids.¹⁸⁸ Only a year later, after Geiseric seized Carthage, he plundered Sicily and besieged Panormus, today's Palermo. Also there, after urging from the Arianic Maximinus, he set about efforts to convert the Catholic Christians to the Arianic faith, to which some resisted even to the witness of blood.¹⁸⁹ After Valentinian, subsequent to killing Aetius and depriving Italy of its most skilled defender, was killed by Aetius' supporters in 455,¹⁹⁰ the opportunity arose for Geiseric to seize Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica,¹⁹¹ but—as if this was not enough for him—he sailed with a large fleet from Carthage and without any resistance he entered Rome and plundered it.¹⁹² The effect for the city of this plundering was more fatal than Alaric's previous raid of the city in 410. Geiseric's troops took possession of treasures on the Palatine hill, amongst others removing half of the bronze roof tiles from the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter, and deported thousands of people from the city into slavery.¹⁹³ Such extensive land Geiseric preserved up to his death in 477.¹⁹⁴

At some point around this time, at the latest in 454, came the death of Quodvultdeus, whose discourses are the subject of this book. The development of the Vandal kingdom has a significant importance for understanding this work. When Quodvultdeus was born, at some point before the year 400, the Vandals were one of the insignificant German ethnicities, but when he died, the Vandal empire was one of the main power centres in the Mediterranean.

2.4 *Vandal Residence in Africa*

Witnesses from the fifth century agree on the description of the cruelties the Vandals committed upon the Roman people. Victor of Vita claims that the Vandals caused the complete devastation of the previously thriving Africa when they did not stop at destroying fields and vineyards, and burning and looting, but also committed murders.¹⁹⁵ It was also Possidius who spoke about the

188 Liebeschuetz, '*Gens into regnum*', 72.

189 Hydat. 305. 16 (ed. Burgess 94).

190 Marcellinus, *chron.* 455 (MGH AA 9: 483f.).

191 Vict. Vit. 1. 13 (ed. Lancel 102).

192 Procop. 3. 4. 36–3. 5. 6 (ed. Dewing 44–49); Cassiodorus, *chron.* 1263 (MGH AA 11: 157).

193 Conant, 26.

194 The Vandals lost control over Sicily later, during Gunthamund's reign (484–496), gained by the Ostrogoth king Theoderic: Gil Egea, 366f.

195 Vict. Vit. 1. 1 (ed. Lancel 97).

cruelties accompanying the Vandal expedition from Mauritania to Hippo.¹⁹⁶ For both of them, the account of the destruction is followed by a description of the tormenting and killing of priests, bishops, and other ministers in the Church, together with desecrating, and stealing from and destroying Church buildings.¹⁹⁷ The bishop of Carthage Capreolus, in the letter sent to the Council of Ephesus around the time of the besieging of Hippo, depicts the reasons as to why the African bishops could not partake at the council. He depicts there being areas where the people were wiped out, and other areas from where the people had to flee, but the image of destruction was omnipresent.¹⁹⁸ His successor, the bishop Quodvultdeus, was even more specific and vivid in depicting the sufferings of African people at the hands of the Vandals: 'Unbelievable burdens have been laid upon their shoulders, and as their soul was exhausted by such harsh treatment, that heavy weight wearies also their body.'¹⁹⁹ The contemporary witnesses of Catholic authors thus agree with the description of Vandal cruelty and it is also backed up by Geiseric's strong geo-political position: he became the unquestionable ruler of Africa and the people were fully at his mercy.²⁰⁰

In the middle of the nineteenth century, F.Z. Colloombet claimed that the witness of Victor of Vita and Possidius of Calama regarding the cruelties the Vandals inflicted on the African people might be significantly exaggerated.²⁰¹ A century later, in 1955, in his classical work about the Vandals in Africa, C. Courtois doubted the intentions of the then-current writers in describing the effects of the Vandal conquest of Africa.²⁰² Undoubtedly, it is necessary to read the contemporary sources critically with the awareness of a certain one-sidedness or exaggeration, and perhaps also the critical situation in which it was written. This was also the case of Victor's *History of the Vandal Persecution*, written at the time of strong persecution during the Huneric reign around 489. The rhetorical style, objecting to the approach of the Vandal adversaries, does not fully prevent the possibility of creating one's general image about what the relationship between the Arian Vandals and the Catholic Romans in Africa was like.

It is possible to assume that the initial chaos caused by the Vandal conquest of Africa and the capture of Carthage was of a temporary character, albeit

196 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 5 (LCPM 45: 272–274).

197 Ibidem; Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 177.

198 Capreol. *ep.* 1 (PL 53: 845).

199 TB2 5. 11 (CCL 60: 477).

200 Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 179.

201 François-Zénon Collombet, *Histoire civile et religieuse des lettres latines au IV^e et au V^e siècles* (Lyon—Paris: Périsse frères, 1839), 375.

202 Courtois, 166–168.

it meant a certain interference with property rights as well as with the life of the cities that, among others, the Vandals deprived of their city walls, and thus of the possibility of effective defence.²⁰³ The forum in Carthage lasted through the whole of the fifth century, while other buildings, for example, the extensive Baths of Antonius in the same city, succumbed to gradual deterioration.²⁰⁴ Twentieth century archaeological research leaves open the question of whether the destruction of significant Carthaginian monuments, including the Odeon and the Temple of Memoria, was retrospectively attributed to the Vandals, although these buildings might have been destroyed later.²⁰⁵ It is possible to believe that many fertile lands were, during the invasion, left to waste and that many olive groves were destroyed, as depicted in a vivid passage in one of Quodvultdeus's sermons;²⁰⁶ however, it is possible to presume that in the following years the majority of the fields, vineyards and gardens began to be maintained again and brought forth crops.²⁰⁷

Both groups of people, the Vandals and the Romans, had to gradually learn to get on and cooperate. Presumably the Vandals and the Romans intermarried and many Romans also served at the court or in the administration of the Vandal kings.²⁰⁸ After the Vandals consolidated and stabilised the holding of the former Roman provinces, they presumably were satisfied with preserving the current Roman administration, including Latin as the official language and the nomenclature of particular administrative titles so that even large landowners continued being titled as persons of senator status.²⁰⁹ The Vandal kings were inspired by the Roman emperors in building public welfare service buildings. Soon afterwards they began finding favour with the Roman lifestyle with its conveniences and pleasures²¹⁰—undoubtedly, together with the Romans, they visited chariot races in the hippodrome and theatre plays.²¹¹

203 Ibidem, 92.

204 Alexandre Lézine, *Carthage, Utique. Études d'architecture et d'urbanisme* (Paris: Persée, 1968), 71–75.

205 González Salinero, *Poder*, 89–91.

206 AQH 6. 3–5 (CCL 60: 279 f.).

207 Gil Egea, 275.

208 Liebeschuetz, '*Gens into regnum*', 70.

209 Ibidem, 74–76; J.W. George, 'Vandal Poets in their Context', in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 134.

210 Courtois, 250. Procopius would consider the Vandal taste for a luxurious lifestyle to be the main reason for their final defeat by Belisarius.

211 The Romanisation of the Vandal people is the especial focus of Frank M. Clover, *Carthage and the Vandals* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Kelsey Museum, 1982); Conant, 19–66; Konrad Vössing, *Schule und Bildung in Nordafrika der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1997), 624–631 offers a less optimistic view of the relationship between the Romans and the Vandals.

The question is what influence the change in the political authority in Carthage had on the culture and lifestyle of the African people, especially in the countryside where people lived an agricultural way of life. The lifestyle of these people probably changed much more slowly. Latin culture was still surviving and, in some ways, it did really well. A close economic connection with the rest of the Mediterranean, so important especially for the African production of olive oil and grain, was also preserved up to the seventh century when the land was seized by the Arabs.²¹² It was precisely naval trade and other archaeological pieces of evidence that confirm that there was no abrupt end to Roman culture in Africa, but rather a gradual change.²¹³

Although the Vandals used their own dialect, close to the Gothic language,²¹⁴ which was used especially during liturgies,²¹⁵ over time they adopted Latin. This was probably forced also by the need to keep using the existing Roman administration.²¹⁶ However, a case is known where the Vandal Arian bishop Cyrila, who, despite his knowledge of Latin, required the usage of his tribal language during discussion with the Catholic Romans.²¹⁷ The Vandals did not differ from the Romans only in language but also with clothing, which was widely adopted also by the Romans serving at the Vandal court.²¹⁸ Thus, it seems that both groups, the Vandals and the Romans, co-existed and cooperated without problem for the majority of the time. Barbarian tribes who gradually settled in the Roman land found a *modus vivendi* with the local people. It is possible to observe this with the Vandals as well, however, with one exception, being religion. Vandal pressure against the Catholic Church remained, in principle, constant throughout the whole period of their rule in Africa.²¹⁹ This is the focus of the following chapter.

212 Merrills, 'Vandals, Romans, and Berbers', 3 f.

213 Ibidem, 13.

214 Procop. 3. 2. 5 (ed. Dewing 10).

215 Vict. Vit. 2. 4 (ed. Lancel 123 f.).

216 Liebeschuetz, 'Gens into regnum', 71.

217 Vict. Vit. 2. 55 (ed. Lancel 147); Whelan, *Being Christian*, 38–41.

218 Vict. Vit. 1. 8 (ed. Lancel 100); for a description of Vandal clothing, see Philipp von Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus: Kleidung und Repräsentation spätantiker Eliten im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert* (Berlin—New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 183–191.

219 Gautier, 208.

3 The Catholics in the Vandal Kingdom

The Vandals were perceived as violent barbarians, characterised not only by cruelty but also by godlessness, absence of human mercy, and a crazy obsession against the local people: 'Without any sign of human mercy, the barbarians require of them heavy duties. Their wailing of those who because of them have lost their spouses and relatives reaches everyday our ears.'²²⁰ The Vandals—like other barbarians—were also preceded by their reputation of being heretics, more specifically Arians. Although it might have seemed that the Arian issue had been solved in the West with the result of the Council of Aquileia in 381,²²¹ especially in the last years of Augustine's activity, discussions with the Arians again increased. And this is the situation that the African Catholic believers and bishops had to deal with. The bishops perceived danger in the Vandal invasion for their believers and their salvation. But it must have been clear to them that in case of a Vandal victory they would lose their privileged position and the economic foundation for their activities.²²² Up until then they had been used to resolving inner disagreements within the Church, and, failing this, then with an appeal to the emperor's authority.²²³ However, this changed with the Vandal arrival.

The many meanings and nuances the term 'Arian' gained in the later developments of the teaching of its originator, Arius, has led many contemporary scholars to question the usefulness of using this category on the basis that it has lost any precision in describing the theologians' opinions. 'Homoianism' describes a theological position that emerged around 357 as an effort to find a formula of compromise that would be acceptable for the majority of bishops in the Church divided by the Christological debates of the first half of the fourth century. Its declaration, famously declared by the Council of Rimini (359), claimed that the Son was similar (*homoios*) to the Father in the broadest sense, without references to divine essence or substance, trying to avoid unbiblical language.²²⁴ The story of Homoianism also involves the Vandals, as

220 TB2 5, 13 (CCL 60: 477); Ps.-Fulg, *serm.* 46 (PL 65: 912); Salvatore Costanza, '«Barbarus furor» in Vittore di Vita', in *Sodalitas. Scritti in onore di A. Guarino*, ed. V. Giuffré (Napoli: Jovene, 1984–1985), ii, 718.

221 Regarding the teaching of the Arians presented at the Council of Aquileia, see *Scolies ariennes sur le Council d'Aquilée*, ed. R. Gryson (SC 267; Paris: Cerf, 1980).

222 González Salinero, *Poder*, 99–101.

223 Pohl, 39.

224 For the Homoianism in the fourth century, see R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine fo God: the Arian Controversy, 318–381* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1988), 348–386 and 557–597; Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian*

the missionary bishop Wulfila or Ulfilas participated at the Council of Constantinople (360) which accepted the Homoian formula of Rimini and later spread Christianity in the Homoian form to the Goths and other Germanic tribes.²²⁵ B. Luiselli and others hypothesise that the faith of the Vandals, one of these tribes, was similar to that of Wulfila, that is, Homoian.²²⁶

This fact, together with the understanding that 'Arian' encompasses too wide a spectrum of theological positions, leads many scholars to prefer to refer to Vandal Arians as 'Homoians'.²²⁷ It is also understandable that, in their effort to remain impartial also from the doctrinal point of view, many historians hesitate to choose sides and call the religion of the Vandals with the same name their Catholic opponents called them: in Quodvultdeus's case also using quite a harsh language. However, I share the doubts of P. Parvis, who asks whether the word 'Arian', used by those involved in the ancient theological debates and replaced with a neologism that means 'precisely the same thing' helps.²²⁸ What is more, S. Parvis also shows clear theological parallels between Arius and Ulfilas, which point to the suggestion that Ulfila's person is 'an excellent unhelpful-

Theology (Oxford—New York: OUP, 2004), 133–166; Uta Heil, 'The Homoians', in *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*, ed. G.M. Berndt and R. Steinacher (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 85–116.

- 225 Philostorgius, *h. e.* 2. 5 (GCS 21: 17 f.) remains the main source for Wulfila; for the Homoian faith of Wulfila, see Roland J. Teske, *Saint Augustine. Arianism and Other Heresies* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1995), 121. Arian doctrines, including the Homoianism of the Council of Rimini (359), were banned by Theodosius in the 380s (*CTh* 16. 1. 2; 16. 5. 6) and after Theodosius seized control of the West, the only group for whom Arianism was conceded was the army, consisting mostly of those from the Germanic tribes: Hanns Christoph Brennecke, 'Deconstruction or the So-called Germanic Arianism.' In: *Arianism: Roman Heresy*, 124. For the imperial legislation on the Arians, see CÆD 27–28; Ralph W. Mathisen, 'Barbarian Bishops and the Churches "in barbaricis gentibus" during Late Antiquity', *Speculum* 72/3 (1997), 667; Id., 'Barbarian "Arian" Clergy, Church Organization, and Church Practices', in *Arianism: Roman Heresy*, 148. The Arians cult was allowed by Valentinian II (*CTh* 16. 1. 4 [386]), after 388 there are only three condemnations of Arianism as such in *CTh* 16. 5. 59 (423); 16. 5. 60 (423), 16. 5. 6 = 1. 5. 5 (428). This legislation remained valid after 437, in the years of the Vandal invasion of Africa.
- 226 Bruno Luiselli, 'Barbaritas theologica. Nuove frontiere teologiche nelle culture "barbariche" dell' occidente', in *La teologia del V all'VIII secolo fra sviluppo e crisi: XLI Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana* (Roma, 9–11 maggio 2013) (SEA 140; Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2014), 118 f.; Mathisen, 'Clergy', 183. For Arianism in Africa before Augustine, see Whelan, 'Arianism in Africa', 240 f.
- 227 For example, Knut Schäferdiek, 'Ulfila und der sogenannte gotische Arianismus', in *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*, 45; Whelan, 'Arianism in Africa', 239, 248, and 251; Whelan, *Being Christian, passim*.
- 228 Paul Parvis, 'Sabas: "Orthodox" or "Arian"?', in *Arianism: Roman Heresy*, 75.

ness of the category of “homoian” as he himself could be described as ‘Arian’.²²⁹ The self-description of the Germanic tribes themselves does not help much, as they would label themselves usually as ‘orthodox’ or even ‘catholic’.²³⁰ This seems to be true also for the Vandal Christians who also called the sustainers of the Nicene Creed, that is, the Catholics, ‘Homooousians’ (*homooousiani; unisubstantiani*).²³¹

The theological discourse, however, can hardly consider both forms, that is, the ‘Catholic’ (or ‘Homooousian’, or ‘Nicene’) and the ‘Arian’ (or, more specifically, ‘Homoian’) as equal forms of Christianity. Unlike the history of religion, theology resorts to Revelation as an inherent part of its method. Striving for orthodoxy, it has to choose sides as it finds one or the other form of doctrine part of the ‘rule of faith’, or not. Extensive interdisciplinary research has enriched the current Patristic studies, but I am convinced that patrology still preserves its theological element. That is why, in this Patristic research, I do not renounce the theological approach that considers the data of Revelation present both in the Scriptures and in Apostolic tradition; in fact, it is something that is shared both by the author of this book and by Quodvultdeus, the bishop of Carthage. While it is not conclusive that ‘Homoian’ fully describes the Vandals’ beliefs, I am going to adhere to the way Quodvultdeus refers to them, being the ‘Arians’.²³² In fact, the Arians were not a homogenised political or religious group and it is an umbrella term for various types of the heresy used by the orthodox adherents of the Council of Nicaea (325). The designation ‘Arian’ does not, therefore, cover only the immediate followers of Arius, but it also branded all those who did not accept the Nicene statement about the consubstantiality (*homooousios*) of the Son with the Father. This also comprises later ‘Arian’ groups, including Anomoeans, Photinians, Apollinarians, Macedonians or Pneumatochi, Sabellians, Marcellians, and Homoians. What we know about the beliefs of the Vandals fits well into this category, which I will use.

During the siege of Hippo, the African Church furthermore lost its greatest figure who had formed its life of the preceding forty years and to whom the Church was used to turning for resolving religious conflicts, whether regarding Donatists or later Pelagians; it was the bishop of Hippo Regius, Augustine. The

229 Sara Parvis, ‘Was Ulfila Really a Homoian?’, *ibidem*, 58 and 65.

230 Joh. Bicl. *chron.* 580. 2 (CCL 136A: 71); Schäferdiek, 21 and 44.

231 Fastid. *serm.* 2; Fulg. c. s. *Fastid.* 1; *dict. reg. Tras.* l. 657; Ps.-Fulg. *test.* 2; Vict. Vit. 2. 39 (CCL 91: 281, 284, 87; 90: 239 f.; ed. Lancel 140).

232 Finn, ‘Quodvultdeus’, 56 f. opines that the Arians of Quodvultdeus’s sermons are ‘Homoians’.

Arian Vandals presented a much greater danger for the faith of the Catholic Christians than the abovenamed groups.

According to Victor, Geiseric's religious persecution of the Catholics began immediately after arriving in Africa. Among the first bishops to be executed, in 430 or 431, were Pampinianus, the bishop of Victor's city Vita, and Mansuetus of Urusi.²³³ Catholic bishops were being exiled even before the full conquest of Carthage. Among these were Possidius of Calama and Novatus of Sitifis, who were exiled before Carthage was conquered in 437.²³⁴

It was Possidius who captured well the transformation of the African Church in the 430s, in his biography of Augustine. There he depicts the last months of his life in Hippo, besieged by the Vandals. He himself was present at the death of his friend, however, he dwelt in the city as a refugee after Calama had fallen into the hands of the Vandals.²³⁵ Augustine died on 28th August 430, the people left the city in July 431, and subsequently the city was conquered and burned.²³⁶ Possidius uses Augustine's life and death to offer a way of responding to Vandal Arianism in the post-Augustine world. In the biography, Augustine is depicted as a monk and as a bishop. The model of his practical everyday conduct was to be an inspiration regarding how to live in the shadow of persecution from heretics, and for their conversion.²³⁷ Possidius devotes a whole third of Augustine's biography to the last years of Augustine's life and his dying and death, but the focus is especially on his activities connected with the invasion of the Vandals.²³⁸ In the last days of his life, Possidius's Augustine weeps several times—something very unusual for contemporary biographies of bishop saints such as, for example, Martin of Tours and Ambrose. The reader should, however, understand that the reason for the saint's weeping is in reaction to the destructive power with which the Vandals turned against the Church and the people in Africa.²³⁹

A special part of the biography is a letter not preserved elsewhere, from Augustine to Bishop Honorius of Thiava, testifying about the panic caused by the advancing Vandals. It attests to how people fled to the fortified towns or to

233 Vict. Vit. 1. 10 (ed. Lancel 101).

234 Prosper, *epit.* 1327 (MGH AA 9: 475).

235 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 13 (LCPM 45: 278).

236 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 10 (LCPM 45: 276). The extent of the destruction of the city is debated because Geiseric settled here up to the conquering of Carthage in 439 and even receives here the delegate of Valentinian III. E. Zocca in LCPM 45: 12 f.

237 Louis I. Hamilton, 'Possidius' Augustine and post-Augustinian Africa', *J ECS* 12 (2004), 86 and 97.

238 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 4–30. 51 (LCPM 45: 272–306).

239 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 28. 6 (LCPM 45: 274); Hamilton, 90.

church doors with requests for baptism or the possibility of doing penance.²⁴⁰ The letter interrupted the depiction of Augustine's last days and it is so long—taking up almost a fifth of the whole biography's length—that its integration in the saint's biography must somehow shed light upon the author's intention of the *Vita Augustini*, being the reason why Possidius wrote Augustine's biography.²⁴¹ There, Augustine focuses on the question of how the bishops and other clergy should act when facing the attacks of the advancing Vandals. He provides an answer to the question of whether the shepherds of the Church could in such a state of danger escape from the city or not. In the light of the Gospel saying, 'If they persecute you in one town, take refuge in the next' (Matthew 10:23), and Paul's escape from Areta (2 Corinthians 11:33), Honoratus and others inclined towards the opinion that it is better to save one's life by escaping. Augustine claims that the believers should not be prevented if they decide to leave the city for a safer place, however, God's servants should not desert their churches and believers in the moments when they are needed the most. He advises the Church shepherds with the saying, 'This is the proof of love, that he (scil. Christ) laid down his life for us, and we too ought to lay down our lives for our brothers' (1 John 3:16).²⁴² He lay on the bishops' hearts not to act like paid labourers, not to escape from service and to be available to the local Church so that God's people might be daily fed with the sacrament of the Body of Christ and thus they could better face the temptations and snares of the devil.²⁴³ Possidius's readers might be especially encouraged by the words which Augustine, right before his death, takes from Ambrose, and by how he reacts to the pleas of his friends to ask God for lengthening his life so that the African Church in such a difficult situation would not be deprived of such a great bishop, and of the service of the word and sacraments to which he had focused upon: 'I have not so lived that I should be ashamed to live among you, yet I do not fear to die, for we have a Lord who is good.'²⁴⁴ With the help of these words, they should live in the difficult situation with the Church, which was entrusted to them, living in such a way that they would not need to be ashamed of it, but at the same time not to be afraid of dying in service, instead trusting in God's intention with man, which is always good.

However, Augustine's figure became emblematic for the dwelling of the Catholics with the Arian barbarians also in another sense: Possidius's *vita*

240 Courtois, 165; Isola, 'Temi di impegno', 273–289.

241 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 30 (LCPM 45: 286–306).

242 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 30. 12 (LCPM 45: 288).

243 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 30. 19 (LCPM 45: 292).

244 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 27. 7 (LCPM 45: 286).

Augustini is the story of Augustine's victories over heretics, where the first is Augustine himself, being originally a Manichaean. Augustine's attitude, quoted by Possidius in the former's letter to Honorius, shows great foresight in that he does not consider the Vandals themselves to be the danger for the African Christians but the moral consequences provoked by their arrival. For the danger is not the Vandals but the fact that the Catholic Church is losing her privileged position and could no more lean upon the support of the emperor's power, thus room for heresies is reopened, being the true danger for the Church and the salvation of those belonging to her.²⁴⁵

3.1 *Vandal Christianity*

How was it with religion and the Vandals' attitude towards it? The missionary bishop Ulfilas, who was given support during the reign of the emperor Valens (364–378) and who adhered to the Arian faith, had a significant share in the conversion of the Gothic tribes.²⁴⁶ The first mention of them being Christians comes from 423, when, according to Salvian, during a battle against the Roman commander Castinus, the Vandals were singing verses from the Scriptures.²⁴⁷ Presumably, many of them remained pagans at the time of the invasion of Gaul.²⁴⁸ When the Vandals, or their rulers, turned to Christianity is not known.²⁴⁹ For the religion of a tribe, the conversion of the leader or the king was important, and this played a significant role also in the case of the Vandals. Similarly, it is not clear when they accepted the Arian form of the Christian faith,²⁵⁰ and this might have taken place in Gaul or in Hispania. Hydatius's report that Geiseric was originally a Catholic and only just before the invasion converted to Arianism has already been mentioned.²⁵¹ This, however, does not automatically mean that the majority of the Vandals had been Catholics.²⁵² Surely it was only a small number of them,²⁵³ however, the Arianism of the Van-

245 González Salinero, *Poder*, 85.

246 Whelan, *Being Christian*, 13.

247 Salvian. *gub.* 7. 11. 45 (SC 220: 462).

248 According to Orosius, *hist.* 7. 41. 8 (CSEL 5: 554), God allowed this invasion in order to bring the Huns, the Suevi, and the Vandals to the Christian faith.

249 The first contact of the Vandals with Christianity might have been mediated by Arianic missionaries sent by the emperor Valens to the Germanic tribes: see Salvian. *gub.* 7. 11 (MGH AA 1/1: 92).

250 Courtois, 35f.

251 Hydatius, *chron.* 301. 4 (ed. Burgess 89f.).

252 Geiseric's mother was a slave who might have been a captured Roman citizen of the Catholic faith: see Hydat. 301. 4 (ed. Burgess 88–90); Courtois, 63 n. 3 believes that at least some of the Vandals were Catholic Christians.

253 Alain Tranoy in SC 218: 61f.

dals at the time of their expedition to Africa was of a very recent date. Regarding the theological positions of the Arian Vandals, not much is known. According to Victor of Vita, they followed the decrees of the Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia, presided over by the emperor Constantius, who was an Arian. In that case, the Vandals would adhere to the Homoian doctrine of the second half of the fourth century, which held that the Son was 'like' the Father but at the same time lesser than him.²⁵⁴

In general, Arianism summarises the streams of thought within Christianity that do not accept the formulation of the Council of Nicaea (325) about Jesus Christ being 'the only-begotten Son of God', who is 'of one substance with the Father', and the belief that there is an 'equality' of the divine Persons in the Trinity. In the case of the Vandals, Arianism became an element that in a specific way joined the whole group together. The Vandals considered the theological unity of their empire to be absolutely crucial.²⁵⁵ At the same time, however, they did not regard it as only a tribal religion—the Vandals considered their Arianism to be the true form of Christianity, which they were trying to justify.²⁵⁶

Nearly nothing is known about the Vandal liturgy of the fifth century.²⁵⁷ The Vandals probably celebrated the liturgy in their own Vandal language. The only, very short, sentence in the Vandal language preserved for us is at the same time a liturgical formulation: '*Froia arme!*—Lord, have mercy!'²⁵⁸ This worship was accessible for the Vandals due to the main liturgical language being in the Vandal dialect,²⁵⁹ as attested to also by Huneric's request addressed to the Byzantine emperor for the Arians in the East to be able to use their language during the liturgy.²⁶⁰

Geiseric, striving to unite his territory in religion also for political reasons, was aiming towards the whole kingdom confessing the Arian creed. After accepting an office at court, applicants were then required to accept the Arian

254 Vict. Vit. 3. 5 (ed. Lancel 176); Andrew H. Merrills and Richard Miles, *The Vandals* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 177–203.

255 Courtois, 287; Yves Modéran, 'Une guerre de religion: les deux l'églises d'Afrique à l'époque vandale', *AnTard* 11 (2003), 21–44; Robert Wiśniewski, 'Local and Overseas Saints and Religious Identity in Vandal Africa', *SE* 52 (2013), 105.

256 Liebeschuetz, '*Gens into regnum*', 77 f.

257 J.A. Jungmann, *Liturgie der christlichen Frühzeit bis auf Gregor den Großen* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1967), 224 f.

258 Nicoletta Francovich Onesti, 'The Language and Names of the Vandals', in *Das Königreich der Vandalen: Erben des Imperiums in Nordafrika*, ed. C. Hattler, S. Hoxter, and M. Barth (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2009), 145–172.

259 Liebeschuetz, '*Gens into regnum*', 79.

260 Vict. Vit. 2. 4 (ed. Lancel 123 f.).

faith. Regarding the institutional side, the Vandal church developed a similar structure to that of the Catholic Church. In particular towns, bishops, priests, and deacons were installed, being subjected to the Carthaginian patriarch. The Vandal church had in Carthage its own patriarch and bishops. Presumably, they were not trying to appoint bishops for all towns as was the custom for Catholics and Donatists before the Vandal invasion. Vandal bishops usually did not attach to their titles the name of their residential town. Each bishop had parishes (*parochiae*) subject to him,²⁶¹ covering areas populated by the Vandals. Unlike the position of the Catholic bishops in the Roman Empire, the Arian bishops were not so interconnected with the civil administration, presumably not holding judicial power similar to *audientia episcopalis*.

3.2 *Geiseric's Persecution of the Catholic Church*

The key problem of the often-conflicting living together of the Vandals and the Romans was, however, religion.²⁶² In this regard, the relationship between the Vandals and the Romans did not develop very well from the very beginning. Previously, during his expedition through Africa, Geiseric intervened drastically against the Catholic clergy, who had stood up against the new rulers and their Arianic religion.²⁶³ After the conquest of Carthage, Catholic churches, together with other property, were confiscated and handed over for the use of Arian clergy.²⁶⁴ Hydatius documents also Geiseric's harsh actions against the Catholic Church and one of her bishops when, as does Victor of Vita, he talks about the bishop and clergy being driven out of the city and, 'as was prophesied by Daniel', and the Catholic churches being handed over to the Arians.²⁶⁵ A significant amount of the Catholic clergy were exiled and the Vandals did not permit those who died to be replaced by new bishops, priests, and deacons. According to Victor's depiction, Geiseric did not allow the Catholic Church to last in his land, and he was not willing to allow the remaining Catholic bishops to settle in his territory.²⁶⁶ In his land, celebrating the Catholic liturgy was not

261 (Ps.-)Ferrandus, v. *Fulg.* 7. 22 (CCL 91f.: 177).

262 Anette Hettinger, 'Migration und Integration: Zu den Beziehungen von Vandalen und Romanen im Norden Afrikas', FS 35 (2001), 121–143.

263 González Salinero, *Poder*, 79.

264 Vict. Vit. 1. 9, 14–18 (ed. Lancel 100, 103–105).

265 Hydat. 304. 15 (ed. Burgess 94). For the discussion of the apologetic character of Victor's *History*, see Éric Fournier, 'Éléments apologétiques chez Victor de Vita. Exemple d'un genre littéraire en transition', in *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity*, ed. G. Greatrex and H. Elton (Aldershot: Routledge, 2015), 105–117.

266 Vict. Vit. 1. 17 f. (ed. Lancel 104 f.).

allowed.²⁶⁷ Quite justly, it is said that, after their settling in Africa, the Vandals became the 'most Arian' out of all barbarians and their Arianism was signified by exceptional aggression.²⁶⁸

Only in the year 454, after the death of the bishop Quodvultdeus, did Geiseric allow, following the request of Valentinian III, Deogratias to become the bishop of Carthage. However, when Deogratias died three years later,²⁶⁹ the Vandals did not allow the ordination of the new bishop in Carthage, nor in the provinces of Africa Proconsularis and Zeugitana.²⁷⁰ Geiseric remained uncompromising even to those close to him, as is shown by the example of Sebastian, son-in law of the *comes* Bonifatius. He was, between 445 and 450, one of the most influential servants at Geiseric's court. However, he was a Catholic and thus was removed: the king did not suffer one of the most important men in his kingdom to have a different belief than the ruler.²⁷¹

However, even in this period there existed cases of conversions of Vandals to Catholic Christianity.²⁷² But much more common were the conversions of Romans to Arianism.²⁷³ Such conversions might, of course, have been free but in some cases pressure was applied. The key, and very active role at this point was played by Arian bishops and other clergy.²⁷⁴ Using various methods, their task was 'to help' Catholics apostasise from their faith and convert to Arianism. Classic means were employed: promises, bribes, and material goods. In some cases, however, the conversion of Catholics, who were also called *omousiani*,²⁷⁵ was forced by the Vandals with threats, as well as actual violence.²⁷⁶ If

267 Vict. Vit. 1. 22 (ed. Lancel 106).

268 Gautier, 88; Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 188; Jacques Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'empire romain* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1967), 530; Hamilton, 99.

269 Vict. Vit. 1. 24 (ed. Lancel 108). Deogratias became the bishop of Carthage on 24th October 454; see PCBE i. 271.

270 Vict. Vit. 1. 29 (ed. Lancel 110).

271 Vict. Vit. 1. 19–21 (ed. Lancel 105 f.).

272 Vict. Vit. 3. 33; 2. 9 (ed. Lancel 192, 125 f.).

273 The presence of Roman Arians in Africa is attested to still after the end of the Vandal rule by Justinian's *Novellae* 37. 10 (535).

274 Vict. Vit. 1. 9, 43 (ed. Lancel 100 f., 116 f.); González Salinero, *Poder*, 108; Liebeschuetz, 'Gens into regnum', 78 f.

275 This term is also reproduced by Vict. Vit. 2. 39; 3. 4.

276 Franes, *Werke*, 16; G. Lapeyre, 'La politique religieuse des rois vandales', in *L'ancien Église de Carthage. Études et documents*, ed. G. Lapeyre (Paris: Beauchesne, 1932), ii. 45; González Salinero, 'La invasion', 221–237. Quodvultdeus reacts to this practice in his pre-baptismal catecheses, see S1 13. 6 (CCL 60: 334), and also AQH 7. 39–43 (CCL 60: 286 f.).

conversion to Arianism took place, the Vandals demanded of the converting Romans that they were rebaptised.²⁷⁷

Although debates between Arians and Catholics were of a theological nature, political reasons for changing religion were evident—accepting the ruler's faith surely increased the chance of career advancement in his administration. The possibility of material security increased as well, and Romans could have peace from the representatives of the new rulers. The Vandals undoubtedly succeeded in significantly disturbing and restricting the structure and functioning of the Catholic Church in Africa.

The question is what motivated Geiseric the most in taking such harsh actions and promoting his Arianic Church. It is possible to hypothesise that he ascribed the phenomenal success of his expedition precisely to the Arian faith and the defence of this faith might have been a reaction to the divine favour received.²⁷⁸ Also, this might be explained by the fact that the Catholic Church was not the only victim of persecution; similarly cruel treatment during Geiseric's, and later Huneric's rule, was targeted upon the Manichaeans, who were exiled, enslaved, and killed.²⁷⁹

Speculations are not absent in proposing that the cruel course of action towards Catholic clergy, including torture, might not have necessarily been motivated only by hostility towards the Catholic faith, but also economically, specifically with the idea that the clergy managed hidden property.²⁸⁰ Moorhead, however, correctly reckons that if the main motivation of the Vandal persecution of Catholic Romans was for economic reasons, the level of this persecution would gradually have decreased with the Vandals' enrichment. It seems, however, that the contrary is the case and, especially after the death of

277 Wiśniewski, 105. The position of the Catholics in Africa was, thanks also to Augustine's influence, precisely the opposite—Catholics received heretics and schismatics into the Church without the need to be rebaptised: Quodvultdeus fiercely opposed the practice of new baptism: see CIPA 20. 1; L D. 14. 23 (CCL 60: 255, 208). Liebeschuetz, 'Gens into regnum', 79 believes the new baptism might have been required as a clear gesture of joining the Arianic faith and as an important step in joining the Vandal gens. See also Éric Fournier, 'Rebaptism as a Ritual of Cultural Integration in Vandal Africa', in *Shifting Cultural Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. D. Brakke, D.M. Deliyannis, and E. Watts (Aldershot: Routledge, 2012), 243–254.

278 Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 193.

279 Vict. Vit. 2. 1 (ed. Lancel 122); Leo I, *serm.* 16. 5 (PL 54: 179). The circumstances of exiling bishops, their enslavement, and perhaps even their death during the journey into exile is discussed by Ireneusz Milewski, 'Zsyłki biskupów katolickich w afrykańskim państwie Wandalów w relacji Wiktora z Wity', *VoxP* 31/56 (2011), 517–525.

280 Hans-Joachim Diesner, 'Sklaven und Verbannte, Märtyrer und Confessoren bei Victor Vitensis', *Philologus* 106 (1962), 108 ff.; Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 175.

the bishop Deogratias in 457, the persecution significantly increased to a peak during the time of Geiseric's successor, Huneric. Besides, the confiscation of Catholic property, including churches, lands, and liturgical items, did not go to the ruler but was received by the Arian clergy, who took over basilicas as well as episcopal houses.²⁸¹ This is also the case of Carthage's cathedral, the so-called *Basilica restituta*, which had held significant African councils. Victor of Vita mentioned it among the buildings handed over to the Arians,²⁸² and archaeological and epigraphic findings correspond with this account, attesting that in the fifth century the basilica was used by Arians.²⁸³ The exiled bishop Quodvultdeus speaks about the desecration of the church and the sacred vessels, attributing eternal death to the heretics who had committed this.²⁸⁴ If the motive for the attack on the Catholic Church was especially for economic reasons, the ruler would have enriched himself especially, and perhaps even his favoured ones, and not the representatives of his religion.

The motivation of the Vandals in persecuting the Catholic Church was therefore most likely primarily religious: their aim was to erase the Catholic Church from the map of Africa.²⁸⁵ If the Vandals used bribes during the first phase of conquering Africa in their attempts to gain the conversion of Romans to Arianism,²⁸⁶ it is difficult to claim that religion was insignificant for them. If this was related primarily to economic benefit, mere confiscation and exile or putting the original owner to death would suffice. If this regarded only economic reasons, Catholic basilicas might have been converted to another purpose. Instead, they were either destroyed or in most of the cases handed over to the usage of Vandal 'religion'.²⁸⁷ According to Victor, Geiseric proscribed religious singing during Catholic funerals, reasoning that it is a manifestation of propaganda of the Catholic dogma of the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son.²⁸⁸ C. Courtois doubts Victor's testimony in this as being ahistorical and the mere product of the historian's imagination to defend the integrity of the property possession of the Romans in general and the Church particularly;²⁸⁹ however, Victor's depiction fits with the context of other steps of Geiseric against the

281 (Ps.-)Ferrandus, v. *Fulg.* 1. 4 (CCL 91F: 158); Lapeyre, 38, 75 f.; Isola, *Cristiani*, 49 f.

282 Vict. Vit. 1. 15 (ed. Lancel 103 f.).

283 González Salinero, *Poder*, 103; that this is true for other churches as well, see Ennabli, *Inscriptions*, 49.

284 L 2. 34. 76 (CCL 60: 142).

285 González Salinero, *Poder*, 107.

286 TB1 8. 7 (CCL 60: 436); Aug. *ep.* 228. 5 (CSEL 57: 587 f.).

287 Vict. Vit. 1. 9 (ed. Lancel 100 f.).

288 Vict. Vit. 1. 16 (ed. Lancel 104).

289 Courtois, 285–289.

Catholic Church, with the number of Catholic bishops that remained in Africa at the end of his rule speaking especially powerfully, amounting to three.²⁹⁰

Even historians of that time noticed that 'the loss of souls' and 'plundering of property' concerned in a special way the clergy, 'the servants of God', that is, monks and nuns. Victor of Vita speaks of plundered, desecrated, and destroyed churches, basilicas, cemeteries, and monasteries, depicting how the Vandals 'put the distinguished bishops and noble priests to death with different kinds of torments, as they tried to make them give up any gold or silver belonging to themselves or the churches'.²⁹¹ The cruelty of the conquerors of Africa, aimed especially at clergy, is attested to also by Prosper of Aquitaine.²⁹² Not all priests were killed; many of them were, similar to Roman aristocrats, sent into exile and mentions of them can be found even in such remote places as Edessa.²⁹³ This tactic of exiling Catholic bishops who had not changed their faith, and the confiscation of churches and Church property, was utilised by Geiseric right from the first phase of the African expedition and he continued with it even after the conquest of Carthage in 439.²⁹⁴ In this case, it is hard to imagine a key motivation other than the religious one. This is true especially regarding Huneric's persecution at the end of the fifth century, when its course and effect lies, however, beyond the frame of the historical period of our interest, that is, recording Quodvultdeus's sermons.²⁹⁵

The question is to what extent another issue was motivated by religion: the most painful image for the Vandal rulers was those members of their own ethnicity who wanted to receive the Catholic faith. Thus, they strictly forbade Catholics in their efforts to convert Arians to their faith²⁹⁶ and if a Vandal was seen to enter a Catholic church he was attacked and, in the case of a woman, dishonoured.²⁹⁷ This could be interpreted as a betrayal of one's own ethnicity and thus be a political issue, however, a religious motivation is difficult to dismiss.

Whether the persecution of the Catholic Church and its representatives might have been motivated also economically, militarily, or politically, the

290 Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 234 n. 21.

291 Vict. Vit. 1. 5 (ed. Lancel 99, tr. Moorhead 4).

292 Prosper, *chron.* 2. 747 (PL 51. 598).

293 Theodoretus of Cyrrhus, *ep.* 52 and 53 (SC 98: 128–130) mentioned an African bishop, Cyprian.

294 Prosper, *epit.* 1327 (MGH AA 9: 475); (Ps.-)Ferrandus, *v. Fulg.* 1. 4 (CCL 91F: 158); Courtois, 285.

295 Regarding Huneric's persecution, see, e.g., Whelan, *Being Christian*, 181–183.

296 Vict. Vit. 3. 4 (ed. Lancel 175 f.); (Ps.-)Ferrandus, *v. Fulg.* 6 f. (CCL 91F: 171 ff.).

297 Vict. Vit. 2. 9 (ed. Lancel 125 f.).

strength and cruelty of the persecution speaks for the primacy of religious motives that led the Vandals to seek to uproot the Catholic Church in Africa systematically, even down to its foundations. No other barbarian leader was able to show and maintain such a cruel persecution for as long a time as the Vandals and their rulers did.²⁹⁸ The Vandals were very systematic in persecuting the Catholic faith and Geiseric was aiming for the complete destruction of the Catholic Church, which he wanted to fully substitute with Arianism.²⁹⁹ It is possible to say that he succeeded in a significant way.³⁰⁰



But not even the Vandal kingdom lasted an age. In 534 Carthage was reconquered by Justinian's general Belisarius and Africa became a part of Byzantine territory. However, not even this presence was permanent and the Church never fully recovered from the preceding persecution. Less than two centuries later, the Byzantine presence in Africa was, however, swept away by the Arab invasion around the year 700. But it is worth noticing that some Christian centres survived into later periods as well. In the eleventh century, Roman popes maintained contact with five African bishops and the last Christian inscription written in Latin in Kairouan in Tunisia is dated to 1076. Carthage appears in 1192 as an episcopal seat in the Roman *Liber censuum*—but this is the last record concerning the dying Church in Africa.³⁰¹ These events, however, would take place many centuries after Quodvultdeus delivered his sermons in Carthage. And it is precisely on his life and work that the following chapter focuses.

298 Herwig Wolfram and Thomas Dunlap, *The Roman Empire and its Germanic peoples* (Berkeley, Cal. et al.: University of California Press, 2005), 175; Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 231.

299 Faustin Bashuth Mapwar, 'La résistance de l'Église catholique à la foi arienne en Afrique du Nord: un exemple d'une Église locale incultivée?', in *Cristianesimo e specificità regionali nel Mediterraneo latino* (secc. IV–VI). *XXII Incontro di Studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma, 6–8 maggio 1993* (SEA 46; Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1994), 200.

300 Ralf Bockmann, 'The Non-Archaeology of Arianism—What Comparing Cases in Carthage, Haïdea and Ravenna Can Tell Us about "Arian" Churches?', in *Arianism: Roman Heresy*, 203. According Leslie Dossey, 'The Last Days of Vandal Africa: An Arian Commentary on *Job* and in Historical Context', *JThS* NS 54 (2003), 111 f., by the end of the fifth century, the vast majority of original Roman elites in Africa accepted the Arianism.

301 Saxer, 'Africa', 98. The gradual demise of Christianity in Roman Africa is the focus of Mark A. Handley, 'Disputing the End of African Christianity', in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, 291–310.

Quodvultdeus and His Work

1 Life of a Deacon and a Bishop

Antiquity knew only two works authored by the deacon Quodvultdeus: two letters where he is asking Augustine to write a manual of heresies for the needs of Carthage's clergy, from which came the small treatise *De haeresibus* at the end of the bishop of Hippo's life. Other direct historical testimonies about Quodvultdeus are very scarce. However, based on these and on existing research, I am aiming to sketch the life of this, until recently, almost unknown Church Father.

Quodvultdeus probably came from Carthage. Some researchers, however, believe that he might have come from the province called Avaritana or Abaritana because *Liber promissionum*, ascribed now to Quodvultdeus, recalls a custom spread in this locality: showing statues of pagan gods hidden in caves in the way that 'whole towns including clergy were forced to perjurious godlessness'.¹ R. Braun believes that Christianity came relatively late to this remote area situated probably to the south from Byzacena and to the north east from Tripolitana,² and thus paganism remained dominant here as late as the fifth century.³ Regardless of whether Quodvultdeus' birthplace was the centre of Roman Africa or its periphery, we discover him in any case as a young man in Carthage at the latest in the year 407/8,⁴ when he was an eyewitness of the conversion of the pagan temple of the goddess Caelestis into a Christian church.⁵ Quodvultdeus thus probably was born at some point after the year 390.⁶

1 L 3. 38. 45 (CCL 60: 186).

2 J. Desanges and S. Chaker, 'Abaritana ou Avaritana provincia', in *Encyclopédie Berbère* 1 (1984), 57.

3 René Braun, 'Un témoignage littéraire méconnu sur l'*Abaritana provincia*', *Revue Africaine* 103 (1959), 114–116.

4 Jean-Louis Maier and Othmar Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1959), 391–395 present the year of the dedication as 399, R. Braun in SC 101, 71–72 believes that at that time it was only the closing of the pagan temples that took place while the conversion of the temple of Caelestis occurred in the second stage, that is, in 407/8.

5 L 3. 38. 44 (CCL 60: 185f.).

6 This dating is more suitable also regarding other events of Quodvultdeus's life: at the end of Augustine's life, when he wrote as a deacon his *epp.* 221 and 223, he was roughly forty years old and he would become a bishop only shortly afterwards. He would spend the sixth decade of his life exiled where he would die around the age of sixty.

Quodvultdeus, whose name is made up of the Latin sentence *quod vult deus*, that is, 'what God wants' or 'how God wants', did not have a particularly unusual name for an African Christian.⁷ For the African people continued the Punic, Semitic tradition of creating composite names that express a wish or a kind of saying. So, we encounter names like Vincemalos ('Overcome all evil') or Deogratias ('Thanks be to God');⁸ indeed, even Augustine named his son Adeodatus, 'given by God'.⁹

If Quodvultdeus spent his childhood in Avaritana, and if he noticed the difficulties that the pagan cult meant for the local clergy, it is possible to hypothesise, together with regard to his name, that he came from a Christian family. Nothing in the works attributed to Quodvultdeus indicates that he was baptised as an adult. Similarly, the reference to 2 Tim 3:15 in the sermon *De quattuor virtutibus caritatis* (QVC) that 'already in his youth he had learned the Holy Scriptures'¹⁰ might be a sign of him growing up as a Christian, however, here this might be a literal *topos* as a defence of the relative youth of the new bishop, who knows that he has authority over the lives of those older and more meritorious. Therefore, the question of Quodvultdeus's geographical and religious origin must remain open.

1.1 *A Deacon in Carthage*

At the end of his intellectual formation, Quodvultdeus became a deacon of the Church at some point during the long episcopate of the Carthaginian bishop Aurelius (393–430). From the point of view of Church organisation, Carthage in the fifth century was divided into at least six or possibly seven 'regions'.¹¹ Each

7 PCBE enumerates the total of 25 African figures of this name between the fifth and sixth centuries; 'our' Quodvultdeus is noted here as number five.

8 These names are surely an expression of the traditional understanding of religion, which might reach as far back as to the Phoenician period and Semitic thinking pertaining to Punic language: Gabriel Sanders, 'L'onomastique des inscriptions latines métriques de l'Afrique romaine: un angle d'incidence socio-culturel', in *L'Africa romana. Atti del V convegno di studi*, ed. A. Mastino (Sassari: Università degli Studi di Sassari, 1988), 73 f.

9 Adeodatus was born probably in 372, was baptised with Augustine at the age of fifteen during Easter 387, and died probably two years later: see *conf.* 9. 6. 14 (CCL 27: 141). Also, this name, a translation of the Punic 'Iatanbaal', was common in Africa: Goulven Madec, 'Adeodatus', in *AL* 1 (1986–1994), 87.

10 QVC 1. 7 (CCL 60: 367).

11 Literary sources attest to six regions: see Serge Lancel, 'Carthage', in *AL* 1 (1986–1994), 766, however, following the Roman example, seven regions are expectable: see Leone, 96 n. 7. Ennabli, *Carthage*, 142–146 suggests the hypothesis of Carthage's division into six regions.

had its own basilica and, most importantly, a responsible servant of the Church who was a deacon—following the example of Acts 6:1–6, Rome and other important cities, and among these most likely also Carthage, had seven deacons.¹² As a deacon, thus, Quodvultdeus was in charge of one of these Church ‘regions’, taking care especially of economic and charitable matters connected with the life of the Church.

We know almost nothing about the years of Quodvultdeus’s service as a deacon, when he actively participated in the life of the Carthaginian Church and when he experienced many significant moments in this heart of the African Church; the exception is one episode which is brought to the attention by Augustine in his work *De haeresibus* and which is also mentioned by Possidius of Calama in Augustine’s biography.¹³ From the impulse of the emperor’s prosecutor Ursus, who was a zealous supporter of the Catholic faith, the arrest of a group of Manichaeist ‘chosen’ (*electi*) took place at some point between 417 and 421.¹⁴ These were brought to a church¹⁵ where they were officially questioned by the bishops present, among these also Augustine,¹⁶ and the deacon Quodvultdeus was also present at the questioning.¹⁷ Matters here included ‘undignified and shameful acts’¹⁸ carried out in private by this group of Manichaeists, among which were, according to Augustine, eating the Eucharistic meal mixed with human semen for the purpose of purifying the divine substance present in ‘the chosen ones’, and also the abuse of a girl under the age of twelve.¹⁹ However, the important fact for our depiction here is that Quodvultdeus served as a deacon

12 Antoine Faivre, ‘Diaconus’, in *AL* 2 (1996–2002), 397.

13 Aug. *haer.* 46. 9 (CCL 46: 314f.); Possidius, *v. Aug.* 16 (LCPM 45: 208–210).

14 Maier and Perler, 364f.

15 If this regarded dogmatic issues, the accused were not usually questioned by the civil authority but by ecclesial authority, that is, bishops. An important role in civil judiciary pertained to bishops as well within the frame of so-called *audientiae episcopalis*, however, with the exception of significant offences (*crimines*): cf. *CTh* 16. 2. 23 (376); Charles Munier, ‘Audientia episcopalis’, in *AL* 1 (1986–1994), 511–514.

16 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 16. 1–2 (LCPM 45: 208). Manichaeans were persecuted from the time of Diocletian, however, with varying intensity. Anti-Manichaean legislation considered Africa in a special way: *CTh* 16. 5. 35 (17th May 399) was addressed directly to *vicarius* of the African province: cf. Per Beskow, ‘The Theodosian Laws against Manichaeism’, in *Manichaean Studies. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Manichaeism. August 5–9, 1987, Department of History of Religions, Lund University, Sweden*, ed. P. Bryder (Lund: Plus Ultra, 1988), 1–111.

17 Aug. *haer.* 46. 9 (CCL 46: 315).

18 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 16. 2 (LCPM 45: 208).

19 Aug. *haer.* 46. 9 (CCL 46: 315).

of the Carthaginian Church from a relatively young age, and it was at least ten to fifteen years that passed from, at the latest, the year 421 until his episcopal ordination.²⁰

The episode also reveals that Quodvultdeus knew Augustine personally and not only through his writings. He was, with the highest probability, present during at least some of Augustine's preaching delivered in Carthage and these he probably knew also in literary form. For he adopted the style of speech of the Bishop of Hippo so well that his own addresses ended up attributed to Augustine for many centuries. Beginning with Ursus' expedition against the Manichaeans, it is possible to notice the connection joining Quodvultdeus and Augustine; this later became evident in writings attributed to Quodvultdeus, showing a good knowledge of Augustine's theology. Thus, despite the significant age difference of around thirty-five years in comparison with Augustine, Quodvultdeus belonged, together with Possidius of Calama and Evodius of Uzala, to the inner circle of Augustine's friends and students. Another correspondence, which has not survived, took place between Quodvultdeus and Augustine²¹—Augustine speaks of 'episcopal proceedings'²² from the questioning which Quodvultdeus sent to the bishop of Hippo. Based on this data, it might even be possible to hypothesise that Quodvultdeus was not managing only one of Carthage's 'regions' but that he might have held the more important position of bishop's secretary, and that the bishop Aurelius entrusted him even with more important tasks, amongst which might also have been correspondence with other African bishops. Equally, however, the deacon Quodvultdeus might merely have sent the 'episcopal proceedings' to Augustine simply due to their close relationship.

As Quodvultdeus to quite an extent dealt with those Manichaeans that the episode is concerned with, in his later writings—and we could have encountered in Carthage around the year 420 a strong presence of Manichaeans with whom the deacon Quodvultdeus had dealings with²³—we can presuppose that the description of Manichaeans in his writings is not merely theoretical but

20 It is, however, possible that Quodvultdeus became a deacon earlier, that is, even before the year 417.

21 González Salinero, *Poder*, 32 presents the example of Aug., *ep.* 228 (CSEL 57: 484–496): *Caritati tuae misso exemplo epistolae, quam fratri Quodvultdeo nostro coepiscopo scripsi ...* This letter, however, does not concern 'our' Quodvultdeus but a 'brother bishop' of the same, relatively common, name: cf. PCBE 952, s. v. Quodvultdeus 14; this correction of conjecture by Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 126 f. is presented at the end also by González Salinero, *Poder*, 33.

22 Aug., *haer.* 46. 9 (CCL 46: 315): *gesta episcopalia*.

23 See p. 275 ff. below.

is based upon strong and personal experience with the religious group whose customs Christians considered shameful and sacrilegious.

1.2 *Quodvultdeus's Correspondence with Augustine*

The experience with the Manichaeans described above—and probably also with many other Christian groups present in the melting pot of the African metropolis—led the deacon in charge of one of Carthage's 'regions' to be interested in defending the unity of the Church and teaching her doctrine. Thus, Quodvultdeus wrote at some point around the year 428/29 to Bishop Augustine a request for his writing a handbook for the clergy of Carthage with a brief summary of various heresies, thus to aid the education of the local clergy as well as for Quodvultdeus's own spiritual gain.²⁴ Augustine at first refused the deacon, saying that he was already overloaded. Besides, he objected that there were relatively plenty of similar handbooks and that other authors had already written similar anti-heretic manuals, whether Epiphanius or Philastrius of Brescia, offering to send Epiphanius's writing to have it translated into Latin.²⁵

Deacon Quodvultdeus, however, knew about the existing Christian writings discussing heresies²⁶ and in his second letter (*ep.* 223 in Augustine's epistolary corpus) specified what he envisaged from Augustine, and what the works of the previous authors had not fulfilled. Besides the list of heresies, Quodvultdeus was missing also a presentation of truth, that is, positive teachings, and also a description of the religious practice of particular groups of heretics. He also perceives the difficulty in that basically no one was able to translate Epiphanius from Greek to Latin, thus it being of little use in Carthage. Furthermore, he adds another reason for writing a new anti-heretic handbook: those 'honourable bishops' who wrote the anti-heretic works had been dead a long time and, since then, new heresies had appeared. Quodvultdeus further expected a work from Augustine that would be as simple and as concise as possible.²⁷

In his second reply, Augustine consented and even spoke about his initial intention to send a sample to Quodvultdeus at first to consider whether the writings corresponded with his expectations.²⁸ However, he complains that two tasks which he considers key did not allow him to do so: working on the

24 Quodvultdeus in Aug., *ep.* 221. 3 (CSEL 57: 444). The identification of the deacon Quodvultdeus with the later Bishop of Carthage was suggested for the first time by Morin, 'Pour une future édition', 157 and 161. Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 51–53 evaluates the arguments for this identification.

25 Aug., *ep.* 222. 2 (CSEL 57: 447).

26 Quodv. in Aug., *ep.* 221. 3 (CSEL 57: 444).

27 Quodv. in Aug., *ep.* 223. 2 (CSEL 57: 450 f.).

28 Aug., *ep.* 224. 1 (CSEL 57: 451 f.).

revision of his whole-life work *Retractationes*, which has been preserved up to today, and also a response to eight books written by Julian of Aeclanum which, however, he did not manage to finish and which remains in fragments as *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum*.²⁹ In the end, the Bishop of Hippo made time for Quodvultdeus's appeal and, with witty reference to the meaning of the deacon's name, he wrote in the introduction to the writing known as *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum*: 'I will do what God wants', *faciam quod uult deus*.³⁰ A short handbook *De haeresibus* became the result of their mutual correspondence where the Bishop of Hippo lists eighty-eight heresies, from 'Simonians' up to the 'Pelagians'.³¹ Less than two years after this correspondence, the Vandals would besiege Hippo and Augustine would be dead.³²

1.3 *The Bishop of Carthage*

In the year 430 there was not only the death of Augustine but also that of Aurelius, the bishop of Carthage and primate of the African Church. Capreolus became his successor. We know that he held the office of Carthaginian bishop in 431, when he wrote a letter to the Council of Ephesus excusing the African bishops for their inability to participate at the council due to the Vandal invasion.³³ Correspondence between the Hispanic monks Vitalis, Tonantius, and Capreolus, where Capreolus talks about the plague (*pestis*) of Nestorianism condemned at the Council of Ephesus reveals that Capreolus led the Carthaginian Church for some time after the council.³⁴ During Capreolus' episcopate, Quodvultdeus was still serving as a deacon, possibly even a kind of 'archdeacon', who was in charge of more significant tasks.

The researchers do not fully agree on the date of Quodvultdeus becoming the bishop of Carthage, but the most commonly given year of the beginning of his episcopate is the year 437.³⁵ Based on the interpretation of the episode of healing an Arabic girl, which took place in 434 and about which Quodvult-

29 Aug., *ep.* 224. 2 (CSEL 57: 452f.).

30 Aug. *haer.* praef. 1 (CCL 46: 286).

31 Aug. *haer.* (CCL 46: 290–342); *epp.* 221–224 (CSEL 57: 442–456).

32 The Quodvultdeus mentioned in Aug., *ep.* 228 = Possidius, *v. Aug.* 30. 3 (LCPM 45: 284) addressed to the bishop Honorius of Thiava is another bishop (*nostro coepiscopo*) than the Carthaginian bishop for he became bishop only after Augustine's death.

33 Capreolus's letter is discussed by Lapeyre, 1–10.

34 *Ep. Vit. et Tonant.* (PL 53: 847–849); Capreolus, *ep. ad Vit. et Tonant.* (PL 53: 849–858); ACCE II 3, 3, VI–X; González Salinero, *Poder*, 35.

35 Strobl, 191 and 201 presents a significant range of years when Quodvultdeus might have become a bishop according to particular researchers: 431/439 Courtois; 431/39 Drobner, Mandouze; 434 Schepens; 437 Franes.

deus talks in *Liber promissionum*,³⁶ W. Strobl, however, believes that the bishop, thanks to whom the healing took place and who is throughout the whole time in the background, is Quodvultdeus himself.³⁷ As Quodvultdeus's predecessor Capreolus was still alive in 431, and as the 'co-bishop' (*coepiscopus*) Quodvultdeus mentioned by Augustine in the letter to Honorius of Thiava written in 428/9 is not identical with the Carthaginian bishop with the same name, it is necessary to consider the year of Quodvultdeus becoming bishop to be within the interval of 432–434.³⁸

It might be possible to date the sermon *De quattuor virtutibus caritatis* (QVC) to this period, which might have been delivered by Quodvultdeus on the occasion of his episcopal ordination.³⁹ Several sermons that have been preserved and that are ascribed to Quodvultdeus reveal on the one hand the bishop's strong effort to form the Church entrusted to him, especially within baptismal formation. This is attested by several catecheses at the final rites of the catechumenate, that is, the scrutinies, the exorcism, and the handing over of the creed;⁴⁰ on the other hand, this reveals the tense atmosphere of the endangerment of the Roman province from the Vandal side, which is furthermore connected in the Church environment with the heretical form of Christianity that is Arianism.

During this time, the Vandals held control over a significant part of the African provinces and it is necessary to place in this period the beginning of the confiscation of Roman property and the persecution especially of significant persons, among these being senators, high magistrate officers, and also bishops.⁴¹ It seems that the sermon *De tempore barbarico* (TB1), attributed to Quodvultdeus, might have been a reaction to this first persecution. The period of Quodvultdeus's episcopate, lasting between 432–434 and 440, was thus not a peaceful time, nor the calm before the storm; the Vandals presented a real danger for the people, who had reason to worry.

The moment came on the 19th October 439, when Carthage was conquered by Geiseric.⁴² Regardless of whether the reasons were predominantly religious, political, or both, the fact remains that the bishop Quodvultdeus soon afterwards found himself on a blacklist together with senators and other members

36 L D. 6. 9 f. (CCL 60: 196 f.).

37 Strobl, 198.

38 Strobl, 202; the opposite is believed by González Salinero, *Poder*, 82.

39 See p. 79 below.

40 That is, S1–3, CIPA a and A1–2, regarding these below.

41 S. Lancel in *Vict. Vit.*, p. 281 n. 39.

42 Regarding the Vandal conquest of Africa, see Courtois, 155–172.

of the highest social strata,⁴³ with persecution soon awaiting him. Its form is documented by Victor of Vita at a distance of several decades in the following way:

But then he ordered that the bishop of the aforementioned city, that is, Carthage, a person well known to God and man, whose name was Quodvultdeus, and a great throng of the clergy, were to be placed naked on dangerous ships. Having been despoiled, they were to be driven away. In his merciful goodness the Lord graciously brought them to Naples, a town in Campania, after a safe passage. Geiseric badly treated a great number of senators and *honorati*, cruelly exiling them in the first place and subsequently driving them to lands beyond the sea. When the bishop had been driven out, together with the venerable clergy, as we said above, he immediately delivered the church called *Restituta*, in which the bishops had always had their throne, over to his own religion, and he carried away all the churches which were inside the walls of the town, together with their wealth.⁴⁴

Quodvultdeus's exile and dramatic voyage to Naples took place at some point between the autumn of 439, when Geiseric conquered Carthage, and probably spring or summer 440. I believe that the expelling of the Carthaginian bishop took place at some point in the spring of 440, which is supported by two arguments. The first is offered by A. Isola in his analysis of the sermon *Adversus quinque haereses* (AQH). He believes that this text attributed to Quodvultdeus might have been delivered in 440 and thus its author would have been exiled in this year. For AQH talks here of abandoned soil in which no one sows, and appeals to the landowners to sow despite it being still winter so that they can harvest in the summer.⁴⁵ I hold that a second argument can be added to

43 *V. Fulg.* 1 (CCL 91F: 158–160).

44 Vict. Vit. 1. 15 (ed. Lancel 103f., tr. Moorhead 8): *Tunc uero memoratae urbis episcopo-rum, id est Carthaginis, deo et hominibus manifestum, nomine Quodvultdeus, et maxi-mam turbam clericorum nauibus fractis inpositam nudos atque expoliatos expelli praecepit. Quos dominus miseratione bonitatis suae prospera nauigatione Neapolim Campaniae per-ducere dignatus est ciuitatem. Senatorum atque honoratorum multitudinem primo exilio crudeli contriuit, postea transmarina in parte proiecit. Pulso namque episcopo, ut praefati sumus, cum clero uenerabili, ilico ecclesiam nomine Restitutam in qua semper episcopi com-manebant suae religioni mancipauit, atque uniuersas quae intra muros fuerint ciuitatis cum suis diuitiis abstulit.*

45 Isola, *Cristiani*, 58f. This dating takes place using the foundation of deserted lands men-tioned in AQH 6. 2–5 (CCL 60: 279f.).

this regarding the general regulations of ancient sailing across the Mediterranean Sea: sailing in the winter months was considered dangerous and, at least theoretically, ‘the sea was closed’ (*mare clausum*).⁴⁶ Then, however, Geiseric’s intention would not have been to punish Quodvultdeus and his priests and deacons by death through drowning at sea but only to humiliate him. Indeed, Victor of Vita talks about a ‘safe voyage’ (*prospera nauigatione*), which is hardly expectable in winter months.

1.4 *Exile in Campania, Quodvultdeus’s Death and His Cult*

Thus, Quodvultdeus found himself in exile in Naples. Although he was not able to carry out his office, he did not remain inactive. He cooperated with Nostrianus, the bishop of the city, especially in his campaign against the Pelagian Florus,⁴⁷ to whom Julian of Aeclanum probably addressed one of his works. The writing of Quodvultdeus’s *opus magnum* belongs also to this period, his *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei*, which can be dated between the years 445 and 449. There he also wrote about the long period when the Catholic Christians in Carthage remained without a bishop as a punishment for the sins of the African Church.⁴⁸ Further information about his activities is, however, not available.

When did Quodvultdeus die? The *terminus post quem* of his death is provided by the date of the creation of *Liber promissionum*, which is now attributed to him. The *terminus ante quem* is 24th October 454, when the emperor Valentinian III managed to move Geiseric in diplomatic negotiations to permit the establishment of a Catholic bishop of Carthage, and Deogratias⁴⁹ was ordained as bishop of the capital of the Vandal kingdom. This would not have been possible were the see of Carthage still occupied—by this time, therefore, Quodvultdeus was dead. It is then very probable that Quodvultdeus died in 454 or shortly beforehand: it was precisely his death that might have instigated the diplomatic negotiations leading to Geiseric’s consent for the establishing of a Catholic bishop in Carthage.⁵⁰

46 Oded Tammuz, ‘*Mare Clausum?* Sailing Seasons in the Mediterranean in Early Antiquity’, *MHR* 20/2 (2005), 145–162. All year-round sailing has been possible only since the thirteenth century: see M.A. Denzel, ‘Trade/Trade Routes’, in *Brill’s New Pauly* (2016) <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/tradetrade-routes-ct-e1403600>, accessed 27th May 2016.

47 L.D. 6. 85 (CCL 60: 198).

48 L. 2. 34. 72 (CCL 60: 138).

49 Vict. Vit. 1. 24 (ed. Lancel 108); Vict. Tun. (MGH AA 11.2: 182); Strobl, 202 f.

50 Umberto M. Fasola, *Le catacombe di S. Gennaro a Capodimonte* (Roma: Banco di Santo Spirito, 1974), 160.

Quodvultdeus's earthly remains were deposited at the Naples cemetery of St Gaudiosus and were later transferred from there to the church within the city walls consecrated to the same saint. The church was destroyed during a fire in 1799 and Quodvultdeus's remains were again transferred, this time to the Chapel of St Susanna in the Duomo of Naples. The calendar of Carthage (6th century) sets the *depositio* of the saint on 8th January. Quodvultdeus is also commemorated in the 8th century calendar in Naples on 19th February. He is mentioned repeatedly by the martyrology of Florus of Lyon, Ado, and Usuard, and in the 1619 calendar of Decio Caraffa, the Archbishop of Naples. The Church of Naples celebrates the saint's feast day on 19th February; Cesare Baronio set the feast day on 26th October (perhaps to join with the feast day of St Gaudiosus on 27th October), but the *Martyrologium Romanum* of 1922 set the date again as 19th February.⁵¹ This date is indicated also in the current *Martyrologium Romanum*, published after the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council by St John Paul II in 2001.⁵²

In 1971 U.M. Fasola discovered the funeral chapel of the Neapolitan bishops in the catacombs of St Januarius in the Naples quarter of Capodimonte.⁵³ Each *loculus* is decorated with mosaics of bishops' portraits. One of the mosaics depicts a person of dark skin with distinct cheekbones, bright red lips, a beardless face, and with distinctive eyes, dressed in a white tunic with wide sleeves. The figure is holding in his hands a book decorated with the Latin *crux gemmata* and the winged figures of the four evangelists. Fasola and, together with him, some other experts believe that the person depicted corresponds to the Carthaginian exiled bishop Quodvultdeus. This identification is not certain, however, with regards to the existence of Quodvultdeus's cult in Naples, but it is not possible to consider this improbable.⁵⁴

2 Quodvultdeus's Work

The core of our interest is the baptismal catecheses attributed to Quodvultdeus. Hence, besides a reconstruction of his life, it is suitable at least briefly to introduce his work. However, up to the twentieth century, no work of Quodvultdeus was known. So, I will first introduce the research dedicated to the authenticity

51 D. Ambrasi, 'Quodvultdeus', in BS 10 (1968), 1335–1338.

52 *Martyrologium Romanum* (Civitate Vaticana: Typis Vaticanis, 2001), die 19 februarii, n. 1 (p. 148).

53 Fasola, 155–160.

54 González Salinero, *Poder*, 46 f.

of Quodvultdeus's works. Then, I will offer a brief and preliminary introduction to the individual writings that are attributed to Quodvultdeus now.

2.1 *Authenticity of Quodvultdeus's Works*

In the previous chapter, I stated that Antiquity did not know of any of Quodvultdeus's works with the exception of two letters written to Augustine at the end of his life. Gennadius in his *De viris illustribus* does not, however, mention any Christian author of this name, and any other ancient testimony about Quodvultdeus's writing of any work is missing. Despite this, however, the whole of the last century of research focuses on the question of whether it is possible to attribute several works to this Carthaginian bishop. The whole, almost detective-like, search was begun through doubts regarding one piece of writing, very influential in Medieval times, focussing on biblical exegesis and known under the title *The Book of the Promises and Prophecies of God* (*Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei*).⁵⁵

This exegesis of 153 Old and New Testament promises, with the number being an allusion to the number of fish caught by the disciples after Jesus' Resurrection (John 21:11), is highly recommended by Cassiodorus, the abbot of Vivarium, who determines Prosper of Aquitaine, the secretary of Pope Leo the Great, to be the author of this work.⁵⁶ At the end of the ninth century this work was also recommended to those seeking knowledge by Blessed Notker Balbulus of the abbey Saint Gallen, who also attributed it to St Prosper of Aquitaine.⁵⁷ The treatise is attributed to Prosper also by six out of seven preserved manuscripts of *Liber*.⁵⁸ *Liber* also appeared under Prosper's name in *editio princeps* of Prosper's works published in the year 1538 by Henricus Petrus. However, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the editors of printed editions of Prosper's works became suspicious that *Liber* did not belong to the corpus of his

55 The research regarding Quodvultdeus's works is summarised especially by Franes, *Werke*; Braun, 'Introduction' (1964); Braun, 'Introduction' (1976); González Salinero, *Poder*, 17–31; Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 21–63. I use their research as a foundation for this overview.

56 Cassiod. *inst.* 1. 1 (PL 70: 1111).

57 Notkerus Balbulus, *De interpretibus divinarum scripturarum* 9 (PL 131: 1001).

58 Braun in SC 101: 19–24, esp. 21 and in CCL 60: vi, however, warned that this attribution is relatively late and the oldest of the manuscripts, dating to the year 719, does not mention the author and concluded that the oldest tradition of manuscripts does not bear the name of the author of this work and that the attribution to Prosper took place under Cassiodorus's influence. According to Franes, *Werke*, 47 f., Cassiodorus might have arrived at this opinion during his visit to Prosper's library in Rome, which might have contained the manuscript and Cassiodorus might have arrived at the opinion that it is Prosper's own text.

works.⁵⁹ Thus, Lebrun des Marettes and L.U. Mangeant transferred *Liber* to be among the *spuria* in their edition of Prosper's *opera omnia* from 1711, reproduced by Migne in PL 51 in the year 1846.⁶⁰ The anonymous author of a note in *Patrologia Latina*, however, presents his opinion that the author of *Liber* did not originate from Aquitaine but from Africa, probably Carthage.⁶¹

Immediately after the First World War, P. Schepens built upon this note when, based on two episodes in *Liber* where the author was an eyewitness, he reached the conclusion that the author was from Carthage in the fifth century.⁶² The first of these events is the dedication of the originally pagan temple of the goddess Caelestis in Carthage to become a Christian church during the episcopate of the bishop Aurelius, which took place in the year 399/408 and where the author of *Liber* was present in his youth together with his friends.⁶³ The other episode can be dated to the year 434: the author depicts the exorcism of an Arab girl where he partook as a protagonist.⁶⁴ As in the prologue of the book, he describes himself as 'a puppy among other dogs of the Lord,'⁶⁵ and P. Schepens concluded that the author of the work was a member of the Carthaginian clergy at the time of carrying out the exorcism mentioned.⁶⁶

Further clues are provided by the passages from *Liber* pertaining to the date and place of its origin. The *terminus ante quem* was established by D. Franes through a reference to Valentinian III as the ruling emperor; Valentinian III was killed on 6th March 455.⁶⁷ The author of *Liber* claims to have been in Campania when Pope Leo I (440–461) fought against the Manichaeans and Pela-

59 Braun in CCL 60: xxvi–xxx.

60 PL 51: 714.

61 PL 51: 731f.

62 Schepens, 'Un traité', 231.

63 L 3. 34. 44 (CCL 60: 185f.). Augustine describes how, as a youth, he partook in rituals at the temple of the goddess Caelestis in Carthage in *ciu.* 2. 4, 26 (CCL 47: 37. 62). Regarding the Carthaginian cult of this goddess, see, for example, Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (Leiden—New York: Brill, 1993), 21–43.

64 L D. 6. 9f. (CCL 60: 196f.).

65 L prol. (CCL 60: 1); also, Oros. 1. prol. (CSEL 5: 1–3) talks about himself in a similar way.

66 Schepens, 'Un traité', 232.

67 L 3. 38. 44 (CCL 60: 185). L.S. Le Nain de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles* (Paris: Charles Robustet, 1701–1712) xvi. 129 and Franes, *Werke*, 38 present that at the time of writing the book, Valentinian's mother Placidia was dead, having died in the year 450, thus D. Franes believes that the work should be dated between the years 450 and 455. Schepens, 'Un traité', 231 and Braun in SC 101: 16, however, show that it is not necessary to interpret L 3. 38. 44 in this way and it is necessary to establish a different *terminus post quem*.

gians, especially Julian of Aeclanum.⁶⁸ This papal anti-heretic campaign had begun with a letter addressed to the Italian bishops, dated to 30th January 444. The author talks of this campaign in the past tense and evaluates it, that Leo 'destroyed' the Manichaeans; the end of this campaign can be determined to the year 455, when Valentinian III issued strict anti-Manichaeist laws and when Leo introduced them to the Italian bishops.⁶⁹ The *terminus post quem* of writing *Liber* thus might be determined towards the year 455.⁷⁰ P. Schepens uses for further specification of dating the argument of *ex silentio*: in the allegorical interpretation of leprosy types, which will be considered in one of the following chapters,⁷¹ we do not find the description of the Eutychians among Christological errors. If the author knew about Leo's treatise *Tomus ad Flavianum* focusing on Eutyches's heresy (449) (and this tractate spread very quickly)⁷² or alternatively about the Council of Chalcedon (451) he would very likely have discussed them as an urgent heretical danger.⁷³ Further, *Liber* speaks of the Neapolitan bishop Nostrianus as a living person;⁷⁴ Nostrianus died probably in the year 449.⁷⁵ The last piece in aiding the dating of the writing is the fact that the emperor Marcianus, whose rule began on 25th April 450, granted Aspar the status of patrician; however, the author of the book does not talk of Aspar in this way even though he does not omit the title of honour of Eutropius and Stilicho.⁷⁶ Based on these arguments, it is possible to suppose that *Liber* originates in Campania, perhaps in its capital Naples, between the years 445 and 449.

At this stage it would thus be possible to say with a significant level of plausibility that the author of *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei* was presumably a person who grew up in Africa, and after the year 430 belonged among the clergy of the Church of Carthage, and in the second half of the 440s dwelt in Campania. This portrait clearly is not in tune with the portrait of the previously supposed author of the work, Leo's secretary Prosper of Aquitaine. Thus,

68 L D. 6. 12 (CCL 60: 198).

69 *Epp.* 7–8 (PL 64: 610–624); regarding Leo's campaign against the Manichaeists: Antoine Lauras, 'Saint Léon le grand et le Manichéisme romain', in *SP* 11/2 (1972), 203.

70 Antonio V. Nazzaro, 'Introduzione', in Quodvultdeus, *Promesse e predizioni di Dio* (Roma: Città Nuova, 1989), 16.

71 L 2. 6. 10 (CCL 60: 80 f.).

72 Edmund Hunt, 'Introduction', in Leo the Great, *Letters*, (FoC 34; New York: Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 10.

73 Schepens, 'Un traité', 234.

74 L D. 6. 12 (CCL 60: 198).

75 Nazzaro, 'Introduzione', 18.

76 L 3. 38. 41, 43 (CCL 60: 183–185).

the author of *Liber* must be sought for elsewhere. This was supported by the situation where, in the first decades of the twentieth century, the issue of the identity of *Liber's* writer became connected with determining the authorship of a group of twelve pseudo-Augustinian sermons, the attribution of which to St Augustine was doubted by the Maurists.

Based on chronological and stylistic arguments, Dom G. Morin articulated the hypothesis that the author of these, together with three other sermons, was an African bishop of the post-Augustinian generation.⁷⁷ He took the former Tillemont's hypothesis, that it was one of the bishops of Carthage of the 430s, that is, Capreolus or Quodvultdeus,⁷⁸ and he narrowed it down, based upon those parts of sermons that might have been delivered at the time when the city fell into Vandal hands, attributing the corpus of sermons to Quodvultdeus, who became the bishop at some point in the 430s, before Geiseric's conquest of Carthage.⁷⁹ At the same time, Morin presented two arguments regarding why it is possible to claim that the author of *ep. 221* and *223* in Augustine's collection of letters, written by the deacon Quodvultdeus and the Carthaginian bishop Quodvultdeus, is one and the same person. The first is an ancient custom that the bishops of cities were often recruited from among the deacons. Regarding this, it would make sense that the deacon Quodvultdeus, characteristic in his two letters to Augustine for his significant enthusiasm and determination, would become a bishop of Carthage after Capreolus in the middle of the 430s. The other argument consists in a certain closeness between the letters and the sermons, which Morin perceives in the author's 'unusual natural talent' and 'relative lack of education which does not allow him to pass on everything he would be able to'.⁸⁰ At the same time, he characterised Quodvultdeus as Augustine's 'friend and best imitator', who is often difficult to distinguish from the teacher and who often reaches 'breathhtaking heights'. The author probably was not educated in literature but, even then, following Augustine's example, he was forging beautiful sentences and his observations regarding the life of the African Church, as well as his biblical exegesis, are thought-provoking. For even the modesty with which Quodvultdeus speaks in *ep. 223* cannot be taken literally and the fact that a certain linguistic talent is not lacking in both the composition of the letters and in *Liber*, as well as the sermons now attributed

77 This was definitely proven by Louis Valentin, *Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine, étude sur la littérature ecclésiastique au cinquième siècle en Gaule* (Toulouse: E. Privat, 1900), 656–660.

78 Tillemont, xiii. 923.

79 Morin, 'Pour une future édition', 161 f.

80 Ibidem, 162.

to Quodvultdeus.⁸¹ The author of the letters and sermons undoubtedly shows affection to the church that he served, as well as to the Catholic Church as a whole.⁸² It would be possible to add further arguments to those of Morin. The shared interest of the letters and a significant part of the sermons is the desire for those belonging to the Church to know the true faith and to preserve this faith—together with it also the affiliation to the Church—for this regards their salvation.

The hypothesis that the authorship of the corpus of these twelve sermons should be attributed to Quodvultdeus was subsequently adopted by D. Franes. He further pointed out the similarity of this group of sermons with *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei*, as discussed above. The portrait of the Bishop of Carthage at the time of the Vandal invasion, who was according to historical accounts sent into exile in Campania by Geiseric, corresponds to the portrait of the author of *Liber*, assembled according to internal arguments present in the text.⁸³

Other researchers supported this hypothesis,⁸⁴ however, it is necessary to say that the silence of ancient authors about Quodvultdeus as an author of Christian writings, together with the need to determine the authorship only through internal arguments, continued to raise doubts. Although A. Kappelmacher agreed that these sermons cannot be attributed to Augustine, he expressed doubts, however, over the fact that they had to have had a single author.⁸⁵ Thus, based on Gennadius's information that the author of the writing *Adversus Ecclesiae inimicos, Iudaeos et Arrianos, et alios haereticos* is a certain Viconius, for example, U. Moricca concluded that most likely this is a reference to two of the sermons attributed to Quodvultdeus: *Contra Iudaeos, Paganos et Arrianos* (CIPA) and *Adversus quinque haereses* (AQH).⁸⁶ The same author then expressed doubts about Quodvultdeus's authorship of the sermon *De tempore barbarico II* (TB2); L. Schmidt then determined Capreolus, Quodvultdeus's pre-

81 Thus, I disagree with the arguments presented by Kappelmacher, 89–102, who interprets Quodvultdeus's modesty in *ep.* 223 as being too literal and does not exclude the possibility that Prosper might also have spent some time in Africa and Campania. This, however, does not correspond, especially regarding the description of the dedication of the former temple of the goddess Caelestis in 399/408—it is hard to imagine that Prosper would arrive in Africa at this time (had he ever visited there).

82 Morin, 'Pour une future édition', 162.

83 Franes, *Werke*, 36.

84 Schepens, 'Les œuvres', 76–78.

85 Kappelmacher, 89–102.

86 Umberto Moricca, *Storia della letteratura latina cristiana. III: La letteratura dei secoli V e VI. Da Agostino a Gregorio Magno, Parte I* (Torino: SEI, 1932), 748.

decessor on the bishop's seat, to be the author of *De tempore barbarico I* (TB1).⁸⁷ Not even M. Simonetti was persuaded by attributing the sermons to Quodvultdeus, relying especially on the silence of the ancient sources and attributes to Quodvultdeus only two letters to Augustine. He determines the author of the sermons to be 'some other cleric who boarded a ship together with Quodvultdeus or in general some other African cleric who fled to Campania from the Vandal persecution'.⁸⁸ It is necessary to say that Simonetti's linguistic criticism is monumental and, in principle, dismantles completely the whole 'Quodvultdean' corpus. M. Simonetti does not see a reason why not to attribute TB2 and A1–2 directly to Augustine. Regarding AQH he believes that it might have been written either by Augustine or Voconius, whose work of a similar title is mentioned by Gennadius.⁸⁹ To the same Voconius, he also attributes S1, CIPA, and CN, while TB1, UQF, and C were, according to him, written by an unknown author of the Vandal period. Based on Quodvultdeus's admission that he could not speak Greek in his letters to Augustine,⁹⁰ he refuses to identify the author of these letters with the author of *Liber*.⁹¹

Simonetti's criticism was, however, answered with further arguments supporting Quodvultdeus's authorship by R. Braun,⁹² being the editor and translator of *Liber promissionum* in *Sources chrétiennes* in 1960 and later the publisher of a critical edition of all the works attributed to Quodvultdeus in *Corpus Christianorum*. The great strength of his arguments is founded upon the connections between *Liber* and the sermons on one hand, and on the other hand the letters to Augustine (*ep.* 221 and 223).⁹³ For in these letters he finds a practical approach to heresies and an interest in the Church being victorious against these heresies.⁹⁴ The same concern is then sensed by the reader especially in the last parts of *Liber*. Quodvultdeus in his letter to Augustine is requiring a treatise that would be 'brief yet in full';⁹⁵ in *Liber* we find the same interest, not dissimilar to that of many pastoral workers of our current time, requiring books especially to be brief and concise with reference to the fact that readers will not read anything more extensive.⁹⁶

87 Ludwig Schmidt, *Histoire des vandales* (Paris: Payot, 1953), 235.

88 Simonetti, *La produzione letteraria*, 36.

89 Gennad. *vir. ill.* 79 (ed. Herding 103).

90 Quodv. in Aug. *ep.* 223. 2 (CCL 60: 492).

91 Simonetti, *La produzione letteraria*, 412–424.

92 Braun in SC 101: 101–107.

93 Ibidem, 107 f.

94 Quodv. in Aug. *ep.* 221. 3 (CCL 60: 490).

95 Quodv. in Aug. *ep.* 221. 2 f. (CCL 60: 489 f.).

96 Quodv. *ep.* 221. 3; L 1. prol. 2; 1. 21, 28; 2. 7. 12, etc. (CCL 60: 490, 12, 36, 83).

A certain correspondence is noticeable also between Augustine's treatise *De haeresibus* and *Liber*, attributed to Quodvultdeus. In an article focussed on the Manichaeans, Augustine reminds the reader that at the time of Quodvultdeus being a deacon, the campaign against the Manichaeans took place under the leadership of the tribune Ursus in Carthage, which was already mentioned a few subchapters earlier.⁹⁷ This tribune Ursus, described by Braun as 'a stubborn champion of Catholic orthodoxy',⁹⁸ is known well by Quodvultdeus, and *Liber* describes him almost identically in a not unemotive description of the events connected with the dedication of the former temple of the goddess Caelestis.⁹⁹ Besides this, R. Braun notices similarities in themes, used biblical texts, expressions, and linguistic features, using typology in *Liber* and in the corpus of the sermons, and others.¹⁰⁰ A further two arguments regard the sermon on the symbol of baptism termed *Contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arrianos* (CIPA).¹⁰¹ R. Braun notices a similar usage in the *Sybilline Oracles*¹⁰² and the interpretation of Virgil's fourth *Bucolic* in CIPA and in *Liber*.¹⁰³ In CIPA the preacher also articulates his desire to write down all the places concerning Christ from the Old and New Testaments, however, he regrets that time and duties do not permit this.¹⁰⁴ It is necessary to say that *Liber* is actually no more than a mere attempt to compile a collection of Old and New Testament testimonies and thus we can suppose that the author of CIPA might have brought this to fulfilment at a time when he was not burdened by everyday duties in the office of the bishop of the city of Carthage, and when he was able to find time for writing the treatise in exile in Campania.

Not even in his later works did M. Simonetti change his position regarding attributing the Quodvultdean sermons to various authors, ascribing CIPA and AQH to Voconius, based on information from Gennadius's testimony that the author wrote against the Jews, Arians, and other heretics.¹⁰⁵ I believe, however, that this mention of Gennadius regarding the topic of Voconius's works is insufficient for attributing the mentioned writings to this author, about whom nothing else is known. Voconius was not at all the only Latin-writing author of the fifth century for whom polemics with other religious groups and heresies

97 Aug. *haer.* 46. 9 (CCL 46: 314 f.).

98 Braun in SC 101: 108.

99 L 3. 38. 44 (CCL 60: 185).

100 Braun in SC 101: 109–111.

101 Ibidem, 111 f.

102 CIPA 16 a L 2. 22. 47 (CCL 60: 248–250, 116).

103 CIPA 15. 4 and L 3. 5. 18 (CCL 60: 247, 167).

104 CIPA 13. 10 (CCL 60: 244).

105 Simonetti, 'Qualche riflessione', 201–207; Id., *La produzione letteraria*, 35–38.

was important. I consider the internal witness between *Liber* and the Quodvultdean sermons to be a more important criterium.¹⁰⁶ In his edition in *Corpus Christianorum* R. Braun included the sermon *De quattuor virtutibus caritatis* (QVC) in the corpus, together with *Liber*, twelve sermons, and the two letters of Quodvultdeus to Augustine. Thus, today, there are thirteen sermons in the 'Quodvultdean' corpus.¹⁰⁷ I believe that the weakest link of attributing *Liber* and the sermons to Quodvultdeus remains the issue that this cannot be supported by any ancient witness.

Despite this, we can lean on another internal proof offered by the abovementioned episode of the Arab girl's exorcism in *Liber*, which was relatively recently analysed by D. Van Slyke.¹⁰⁸ The *Liber* author describes the whole episode in the first-person plural, he himself partaking in the event. Unlike other bishops named in *Liber*,¹⁰⁹ the bishop carrying out the exorcism is not named. It was as early as P. Schepens who articulated the conjecture that the author omits this detail due to modesty and that the bishop (*pontifex*) is none other than the author himself. If the episode took place in the year 434 then the only two candidates for the authorship of the writing would be the bishops Capreolus and Quodvultdeus. We do not, however, know the date of Capreolus's death,¹¹⁰ for the last certain date in his biography remains his letter to the Council of Ephesus (431) regarding the African bishops being unable to partake at the council due to the Vandal invasion.¹¹¹ Although many researchers state 437 as the date of Capreolus's death, it was P. Schepens, from whom others adopt this position, who stated that this date was chosen 'arbitrarily' and it cannot be supported by any ancient source.¹¹² Quodvultdeus therefore must have become the Bishop of Carthage between the years 431 and 439, however, it is not out of the question that the bishop at the Arab girl's exorcism was him, because Quodvultdeus could have become the bishop of the city in 434 or even earlier.¹¹³

106 González Salinero, *Poder*, 23.

107 The criteria for this discernment were provided by Lambot, 122 f.

108 Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 30–44.

109 Aurelianus: L 3. 38. 44; Leo the Great: L D. 6. 12; John Chrysostom: L 3. 38. 41; Nostrianus of Naples: L D. 6. 12.

110 Braun in SC 101: 94.

111 Capreol. *ep.* 1 (PL 53: 843–848).

112 Schepens, 'Un traité', 237; Franses, *Werke*, 18. 78; González Salinero, 'The Anti-Judaism', 447; Nazzaro, 'Introduzione', 10.

113 Doubts regarding distinguishing between bishop and priest in this exorcism are articulated by Braun in SC 102: 606 n. 1, believing that Capreolus carried out the exorcism and Quodvultdeus became bishop at some point after 435. Strobl, 199–201 and Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 42–44 agree with Franses, *Werke*.

Recently, Quodvultdeus's authorship of the pre-baptismal catecheses has been questioned by M. Pignot who, among his arguments, shows reservations towards Braun's discussion on the objections about the authorship attributed to the author of *Liber* and, therefore, to Quodvultdeus of Carthage.¹¹⁴ M. Pignot does not even find decisive the evidence of the manuscript tradition or the linguistic evidence developed since G. Morin which show a culture shared by the Bishop of Carthage during the Vandal conquest, the author of *Liber*, and the deacon Quodvultdeus writing to Augustine and considers the arguments in favour of Quodvultdeus's authorship 'reinforcing each other in a circular argument'.¹¹⁵ For that reason, M. Pignot finds that all the evidence in favour of one author of these sermons points to a common environment of these sermons and doubts that all sermons were preached by a bishop.¹¹⁶ He, therefore, considers these sermons 'for the initiation of catechumens in Africa between the beginning of the fifth century and the Vandal period, perhaps in Carthage and the surrounding region', hoping that reading them 'without assuming that they were the work of a single author shall provide a fresh prospective, stressing diversity and adaptations in the catechesis and rites performed'.¹¹⁷

It is true that while it was rare for the priests to preach during the liturgy in the first four centuries, since Augustine was ordained priest by Valerius, the bishop of Hippo, in 391, it became, in North Africa, much more common for the priests to provide a sermon during the service.¹¹⁸ It is even true that deacons or priests could be put in charge of the instruction of the catechumens, as was Deogratias.¹¹⁹ But the role of deacons, priests, or other ministers is witnessed for the earlier stage of the catechumenate: Augustine composes his *De catechizandis rudibus*, written at the request of this Deogratias, as a model for the first instruction of the newcomers.¹²⁰ Especially, the later instruction of the candidates for baptism (or *competentes*), delivered during a solemn liturgy in connection with the (pre)baptismal rites that would be presided over by the bishop makes sense only if the bishop, to whom the eminent ministry of teaching the Church was prominently entrusted, gave these catecheses. What is more, it was not just a task of a preacher, but it was part of the whole mystagogy

114 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 184 questions even the attribution of Quodvultdeus's correspondence to the future bishop of Carthage.

115 Ibidem, 184–187.

116 Ibidem, 185; see Morin, 'Pour une future édition'; Franes, *Werke*; Braun in SC 101: 107–111.

117 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 187. Still, Quodvultdeus's authorship is doubted also by Isola, *Cristiani*, 10 n. 6; González Salinero, *Poder*, 17–25, or Whelan, *Being Christian*, 52.

118 Aug. *ep.* 41. 1; s. 20; Possidius, *v. Aug.* 5.

119 Aug. *cat. rud.* 1. 1 (CCL 46: 121).

120 Aug. *cat. rud.* 2. 3 (CCL 46: 121).

process where the bishop was the mystagogue who initiated the new Christians through the rites and the explanation of their meaning into the Christian life they took upon themselves. This trajectory of the baptismal preparation will be, again, discussed in the next chapters, but it is necessary to mention these arguments so early to demonstrate why I find so little place for doubting that it was a bishop who delivered the prebaptismal sermons in question.

For the present study, in contrast with M. Pignot, the sermons are going to be considered the work of a single author who, most probably, was the bishop of Carthage between the death of Augustine and the capture of Carthage and who is described as Quodvultdeus.

How is it possible that the sermons now attributed to Quodvultdeus were not preserved under his name and for a long time were hidden under the general title 'Pseudo-Augustine'? I believe that a meaningful explanation might be found regarding how the homilies and their stenographic records were created. It was not common for the preacher to prepare his sermon in writing beforehand—this can be documented, for example, by the unsystematic and imprecise nature of many of Augustine's preserved sermons.¹²¹ It was not, however, unusual for someone from the richer Christians to have the homilies of more significant bishops recorded, whether regularly or occasionally.¹²² This was very probably also the case with the sermons of the bishop of such a significant city as the African metropolis that was Carthage. These talks were, to a certain extent, living, and for occasional reading—the homily recorded might have travelled from reader to reader, whether individually or as part of a collection. Out of their very nature, homilies were usually delivered during similar occasions and thus it is of no surprise that their content was also similar; unsurprisingly, a rhetorically-educated bishop, such as Quodvultdeus, spoke similarly to his colleague from Hippo. However, in one matter Quodvultdeus is original in comparison to Augustine, due to the nature of his office: while Augustine was in the end the bishop of a small city, having influence more of an intellectual nature, Quodvultdeus was the bishop of the great Carthage, the leader of the whole of the African Church at a time politically much more problematic than that of Augustine. Quodvultdeus, thus, has his emphases and strong sides; in the following pages I am hoping to discuss some of them.

121 David Vopřada, *Svatý Augustin: Vánoční promluvy* (Praha: Krystal op, 2015), 17.

122 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 7. 3 (LCPM 45: 162); Vopřada, *Svatý Augustin*, 27.

2.2 Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei

The most extensive and significant of the works attributed to Quodvultdeus is called *The Book of the Promises and Prophecies of God* (L; CPL 413). As I have stated, this book was written between the years 445 and 449 in Campania during Quodvultdeus's exile. The prologue of the writing is opened with a quotation of 1 Cor 3:7: 'In this, neither the planter nor the waterer counts for anything; only God, who gives growth.'¹²³ In the work the author aimed at gathering a collection of testimonies comprising of altogether 153 promises and predictions from the beginning to the end of time.¹²⁴ These are divided into several groups to which the structure of the book corresponds as indicated in the prologue:¹²⁵

Book I	before the Law (<i>ante legem</i>)	40 testimonies
Book II	under the Law (<i>sub lege</i>)	40 testimonies
Book III	under Grace (<i>sub gratia</i>)	40 testimonies
<i>Dimidium temporis</i> (D)	'the middle time' between the first and the second coming of Christ	20 testimonies
<i>De gloria regnoque sanctorum</i> (G)	the Glory and the Reign of the Saints	13 testimonies

Quodvultdeus is convinced that God's work remains uninterrupted from the beginning of the human race, through the history of the chosen nation and the beginning of the Church, which lives 'in the middle time' (*dimidium temporis*), up to the moment when God's glory will be fully revealed in his saints. This history of salvation is accompanied by God's promises and predictions, out of which some have already been fulfilled, and others will be seen by those who believe. Following Augustine's example,¹²⁶ Quodvultdeus divides the history of mankind into three eras: from the beginning of the human race to the gift of the Law to Moses at Sinai, the era of the promised nation, and that of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Quodvultdeus finds this division of history foreshadowed in the image of the three animals sacrificed by Abraham in Genesis 15:7–16.¹²⁷ The structure of the book, however, contains another two parts that are directed towards eschatology. The first of these periods, which Quodvultdeus calls 'the

123 L prol. (CCL 60: 1).

124 L 1. 2. 4 (CCL 60: 14).

125 L prol. (CCL 60: 1).

126 Aug. *doctr. chr.* 2. 16. 25 (CCL 32: 51).

127 L 1. 12. 18 (CCL 60: 27). Quodvultdeus, however, alluded also to the traditional image of the six ages of the world in L 1. 7. 11, 13 (CCL 60: 20. 22). Regarding patristic teaching on the ages of the world, see especially Auguste Luneau, *L'histoire du salut chez les Pères de l'Église: la doctrine des âges du monde* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1964).

middle time' (*dimidium temporis*) refers to the 'three and a half years' about which Daniel spoke in his prophecy and which is a sign of apocalyptic times.¹²⁸ At this time before Christ's second coming (*parousia*) the Church lives, afflicted by the attacks of the Antichrist and those who are his. The second period is the glory and the kingdom of saints (*gloria regnumque sanctorum*) that will take place with Christ's coming and fulfilment of time.

The total amount of promises and prophecies is 153 and this number deliberately refers to the amount of fish caught by the disciples after Jesus' Resurrection (John 21:11).¹²⁹ The view of the history of salvation is opened up to the 'eyes of faith' and it is possible to have from the point of faith in the Resurrected One, when the Church lives in 'the middle time'. Quodvultdeus names altogether 103 promises and 50 prophecies; there have already been 83 promises and 38 prophecies of these fulfilled, while the Church is expecting with faith the accomplishment of 20 promises and 12 prophecies. The writing thus shows a sophisticated intentional structure, which is further supported by numeric symbolism: the treatise is entwined with allusion to the number four, signifying the four compass points, the great patriarchs, the major prophets, and the Evangelists, and to the number 12 for the amount of hours, Jacob's sons, the minor prophets, and the Apostles. This symbolism should emphasise the unity, order, and beauty of God's plan, represented by a single 'day' in history, which is, of course, Christ.

The first two parts, dedicated to the Old Testament, are based on a typological exegesis of the Scriptures, which finds a *typus*, an image, of the New Testament realities in the biblical events, figures, institutions, and sayings: Christ's coming, his earthly activities, his torture, death and Resurrection, the creation and life of the Church, and the sacraments established by Christ and celebrated by the Church.

The third part which concentrates on the New Testament receives a different yet firm structure. For each of the forty promises or prophecies, a saying of one or more prophets is first given, which is then confirmed as fulfilled from a Gospel or a saying of Christ. In the third step, then, a witness of the fulfilment of this promise or prophecy is called, in the form of the writings of the Apostles. This witness from the inspired books is, however, supplemented by an oracle (*fatum*) taken from the sayings of pagan sources: Hermes Trismegistus, Sybilla, or Virgil; Quodvultdeus calls them 'confessions' (*confessiones*).

128 Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 99–104; the title of the time refers to the expression in Daniel 7:25; 12:7 and Revelation 12:4 'a time and times and half a time' (*dimidium temporis*).

129 L G. 13. 15 (CCL 60: 219).

The last two parts are inspired by Augustine's description in *de civitate Dei* 20 and 22 and, in effect, it is a collection of testimonies connected with the current life of the Church and with the completion of time at the end of times; most of the biblical quotations in the *dimidium temporis* come from Daniel and the Revelation of John, while in the *gloria regnumque sanctorum* from the New Testament writings.¹³⁰

A whole third of the text consists of biblical quotations, Quodvultdeus thus being a key source for reconstructing the African version of the pre-Vulgate Latin translation of the Bible. Thus, *Liber* might be called a kind of biblical 'patchwork' while the author points out to the reader how each of the 'snippets' of the biblical text are connected, mutually supplemented, and refer to each other. The current reader might even be fascinated by the breadth of the biblical knowledge of the ancient author who vividly confirms what had been told about him in *De quattuor virtutibus caritatis*: he truly learned Scripture at a young age.¹³¹

It is not only a Bible scholar sympathising with Quodvultdeus but also a patrologist: besides Augustine's writings,¹³² the author of *Liber* knows at least some of Origen,¹³³ the father of biblical exegesis, Rufinus's *History of the Church*,¹³⁴ Jerome's commentary on the Book of Daniel,¹³⁵ Orosius's *History*,¹³⁶ the Latin paraphrase attributed to Pseudo-Hegesippus,¹³⁷ and a writing that every patristic scholar, or at least Augustinian researcher, would like to hold in his hands: Ticonius's lost commentary on the Apocalypse.¹³⁸

2.3 De quattuor virtutibus caritatis

The sermon called *Four virtues of love* (*De quattuor virtutibus caritatis*; QVC; CPL 412a) is a commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:7–8. This verse talks about four faculties by which love is expressed and manifested: 'Love is always ready to tolerate, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.'¹³⁹ The exordium of the sermon is very interesting because the preacher talks also about himself and his duty as a preacher to teach and to preach:

¹³⁰ This structure is described by Nazzaro, 'Introduzione', 22–24.

¹³¹ QVC 1. 7 (CCL 60: 293); 2 Timothy 3:15.

¹³² Quodvultdeus uses especially Augustine's *ciu.* and *sermones*: Nazzaro, 'Introduzione', 26.

¹³³ L 2. 6. 11 (CCL 60: 82).

¹³⁴ Duval, 'Un nouveau lecteur', 762–777.

¹³⁵ L 2. 35. 79 (CCL 60: 144).

¹³⁶ L 2. 34. 74 (CCL 60: 140).

¹³⁷ L 2. 11. 92 (CCL 60: 154).

¹³⁸ L D. 13. 22 (CCL 60: 207).

¹³⁹ QVC 2. 2 (CCL 60: 368).

The desire of your love demands of us a due task of preaching. But there are so many things that scare our soul and hold it back! If we would like to go along with your desire, it would not be without danger for us. Firstly, because as a young person (*iuuenis*), I would be forced to speak in the presence of the elders. Secondly, I consider that it would be reckless for an unexperienced person to try to speak among people fortified by the ancient doctrine.¹⁴⁰

Based on the fact that the preacher regards himself as 'young', C. Lambot attributed this to the young Quodvultdeus, being a co-adjutor of the bishop Capreolus.¹⁴¹ A. Isola then articulated a hypothesis that the sermon might have been delivered on the occasion of the preacher's episcopal ordination: the term *iuuenis* would not then regard his age but the 'novitiate' of the episcopal vocation.¹⁴² R. González Salinero then notices also that the author rhetorically describes the situation of the person assuming a high Church responsibility.¹⁴³ The 'elders' would then undoubtedly denote the 'presbyterium' because the Latin *senex* is a translation of the Greek *presbyteros* and was used in Africa for groups of 'priests' as early as from the third century.¹⁴⁴ They were also responsible for the intellectual and spiritual preparation of the newly ordained bishop, which they were able to follow closely and also to form.¹⁴⁵ Other researchers, for example, A.V. Nazzaro,¹⁴⁶ agree with the hypothesis that the sermon was delivered by Quodvultdeus at his episcopal ordination, at that time being about forty years of age, that is, between the years 432 and 434. The hope corresponded also to this context with which the preacher is ending his speech and which could express the desire for full and authentic Christianity, which is not seeking praise from others but to be bringing fruits of love:

140 QVC 1.1 (CCL 60: 367): *Desiderium caritatis uestrae a nobis exigit debitum sermonis officium. Sed tanta sunt quae terreant et reuocent animum nostrum, ut si uelimus parere desiderio uestro, non sit sine periculo nostro: primum, quod iuuenis loqui cogar praesentibus senibus; deinde temerarium esse arbitror loqui uelle (in) imperitia, inter eos quos roborauit antiqua doctrina.*

141 Lambot, 122 f.

142 Isola, *Cristiani*, 120 f.

143 González Salinero, *Poder*, 38.

144 Tert. *bapt.* 17. 1–5 (CCL 1: 291 f.).

145 González Salinero, *Poder*, 39.

146 Nazzaro, 'La produzione omiletica', 47.

Beloved brothers, your hearts and senses should stick to what has been said to your holiness out of the gift of love itself, so that this very love would find in you fruits of works, not leaves of praise.¹⁴⁷

At the same time, it is worth noticing that the author mentions preachers' necessary qualities, as Augustine defined in his *De doctrina Christiana*: 'The interpreter and teacher of the divine scriptures, therefore, the defender of right faith and the hammer of error, has the duty of both teaching what is good and unteaching what is bad.'¹⁴⁸ At the same time, this is also the key to understanding Quodvultdeus's texts which have both dimensions: teaching Christian doctrine including explanation of the Scriptures, as well as correcting the errors of heretics in a way that believing Christians would be able to unlearn the errors and cling to the truth.

For the four dimensions of love, Quodvultdeus finds symbolic figures that help him to develop the allegorical exegesis based on Scripture. Noah was denoted as an example of tolerance, being able to expect the end of the Flood amidst miserable weather, flooding, and also the beasts with whom he shared the Ark.¹⁴⁹ Conforming with traditional patristic exegesis, Quodvultdeus perceives the Ark as an image of the Church and, unsurprisingly in Africa, it was precisely the Church that truly needed tolerance, enduring sinners and heretics in order to survive.¹⁵⁰ It is not surprising that the faith of love is represented by Abraham, the father of faith, who was able to respond to God's calling and leave his own land as well as family,¹⁵¹ awaiting God's promises with such a conviction that he did not hesitate to sacrifice his own son Isaac.¹⁵² Hope that is borne by love then finds its image in the Israel nation that left Egypt, passed through the Red Sea, to be in the end led into the desert, being led by the hope of love to find God, the One who loves first and without cost. This hope of theirs then led them to the rock from which water gushed forth and to the food which God gave from Heaven, and even to the Promised Land.¹⁵³

147 QVC 14. 10 (CCL 60: 378): *Haec, fratres dilectissimi, quae dono ipsius caritatis dicta sunt sanctitati uestrae, ita haereant cordibus et sensibus uestris, ut eadem ipsa caritas fructum in uobis inueniat operis, non folia laudis.*

148 Aug. *doctr. chr.* 4. 4. 6 (CCL 32: 119): *Debet igitur diuinarum scripturarum tractator et doctor, defensor rectae fidei ac debellator erroris, et bona docere et mala dedocere.*

149 QVC 4. 4–6 (CCL 60: 369 f.).

150 Augustine's position on this topic is studied especially by Miloš Lichner, *Vers une ecclésiologie de la "tolerantia": Recherche sur Saint Augustin* (Budapest: L'Harmattan Kiado, 2014).

151 QVC 5. 1 (CCL 60: 370).

152 QVC devotes the significant space of 6. 1–8. 5 to the exegesis of Gen 22 (CCL 60: 371–373).

153 QVC 9. 3f. (CCL 60: 373 f.).

The peak of love is then the ability to endure whatever comes and not to fall. Christ showed this love to man, *finis legis*, especially by his Incarnation and then by his suffering and death on the Cross.¹⁵⁴ Quodvultdeus's listeners are then called to follow such love, especially in a historical situation which requires also from them to endure anything that comes and not to fall.¹⁵⁵

2.4 *Adversus quinque haereses*

The longest speech in the Quodvultdean corpus is the sermon 'against five heresies' (*Adversus quinque haereses*; AQH; CPL 410). Its exordium is also opened by the themes of preaching and teaching that are amongst a bishop's primary duties: 'Brothers, I am a debtor, because it is not a need that compels me to do so, but something that burns even more: love.'¹⁵⁶ The bishop uses this sermon to teach the believers about the five types of 'heresies', thus equipping them for the times when they will be exposed to an attack.¹⁵⁷ The fight with heresies is a part of a wider fight between a 'great and powerful Goliath' and a 'lonely and weak David'; this David is not a mere image of the believer while facing a heresy. A small stone thrown by David is for Quodvultdeus a prophecy about Christ's coming, being he who will defeat the ancient enemy, the devil.¹⁵⁸

These five heresies that AQH addresses are not only Christian heresies as such but also groups that can hardly be considered Christian. In the first place are the pagans, reproached by Christians for worshipping many gods while claiming that the only God has a son. Then it is the Jews criticising the Christians for worshipping a man as a god who died on a cross and also the Manichaeans who considered Christ to be a 'phantasm'. The Sabellians, otherwise known as the Patripassians, belong among Christian heresies per se, being modalists who consider the Father and the Son to be one person; and there is also the Arians, who do not recognise the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son, denoting the Son to be lesser than the Father.¹⁵⁹ The author uses a slightly different way of argumentation against each of these groups, based on what pertains to each particular group. For supporting his claims to persuade the pagans, Quodvultdeus uses testimonies of pagan authors, especially *Sybilline Oracles* and hermetic literature.¹⁶⁰ When talking to the Jews, the

154 QVC II. 1–7 (CCL 60: 374f.).

155 QVC 14. 1 (CCL 60: 377).

156 AQH 1. 1 (CCL 60: 261).

157 AQH 2. 1 (CCL 60: 262).

158 AQH 1. 6 (CCL 60: 261).

159 AQH 1. 7–11 (CCL 60: 261f.).

160 AQH 3. 1–21 (CCL 60: 264–268).

argumentation is based on the Old Testament texts.¹⁶¹ As Christ's Incarnation was a stumbling block also for the Manichaeans, Quodvultdeus's discourse is founded on Isaiah's prophecy, which Christians applied right from the earliest times to Christ's coming: 'Rain down, you heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour down saving justice!' (Isaiah 45:8).¹⁶² At the same time, he explains that it is necessary to use the 'new armour' against the Manichaeans because, unlike the Jews, they accept the New Testament and thus he argues especially using the Letter to the Romans.¹⁶³

The part devoted to the Arians is the longest, and the tone of the sermon is the most personal. Thus, it is possible to conclude that Arianism represented the greatest problem for the preacher and the greatest danger for his listeners.¹⁶⁴ Quodvultdeus declares that Catholics and Arians are connected in many ways, thus they can hold identical positions against the other four mentioned heresies.¹⁶⁵ The bishop even goes so far as to realise that an Arian responds 'I do' the same as Catholic believers to the baptismal creed used in Catholic Africa.¹⁶⁶ At the same time, he does not omit that the main theme dividing both groups is the issue of equality of the Father and the Son; they agree that the Father and the Son are equal in action and power but an Arian confessing that 'there was once a time when the Son was not' does not admit the Son to be co-eternal with the Father.¹⁶⁷

The last part of the sermon is dedicated to the Sabellians.¹⁶⁸ The homily devotes significant space to them as well, slightly surprisingly, because the dynamic monarchism held by this group was at the peak of its popularity as early as in the third century. The author probably uses it as the opposite extreme, in contrast with Arianism, when he notices that both of these theological positions are aimed against each other and expresses the hope that both the Sabellians and the Arians will be converted to the Catholic faith.¹⁶⁹

The whole discourse focuses on the relationship of the Father and the Son, and the preacher himself admits at the end that he did not focus on the role of

161 AQH 4. 1–42 (CCL 60: 268–276).

162 AQH 5. 2 (CCL 60: 276).

163 AQH 5. 3–15 (CCL 60: 276–279).

164 AQH 6. 1–78 (CCL 60: 279–292).

165 AQH 6. 9 (CCL 60: 281).

166 AQH 6. 7f. (CCL 60: 280).

167 AQH 6. 14f., 41 (CCL 60: 282, 287).

168 AQH 7. 1–51 (CCL 60: 292–301).

169 AQH 7. 4 (CCL 60: 293); Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 237.

the Holy Spirit. As he is noticing that the long sermon is wearing on the listeners significantly, he limits himself at the end only to note that the whole Trinity is one God and that what was said about the Father and the Son is true of the Holy Spirit also.¹⁷⁰

The sermon, however, in this passage dedicated to the Arians includes also a very vivid description of Africa endangered by the Arian Vandals:

Where are you, you good farmers? What are you doing, why are you not hard working? You see by what an evil is this country full. On one side, you find thorns, on the other weeds, on the next one fennel. Burn down the thorns, uproot the weed, pull up the fennel, sow new seeds, do not be afraid of the winter ...¹⁷¹ To what kind of farmers do I speak? Some of them are dead, the others ran away. The land has been handed over to the hands of the impious, tribulation and need have found us. O Lord, help us in our affliction, in order that man's salvation would not be in vain, but it would be true.¹⁷²

I believe that the passage captures well the situation of the African Romans after Geiseric and the Romans contracted an agreement in 435, through which the Vandals occupied a significant part of Africa and, although the remaining part of Africa Proconsularis near Carthage remained Roman, the people there lived in great uncertainty regarding what would come and therefore many were not willing to risk losing their crop were they to sow.¹⁷³ If the sermon is Quodvultdeus's then it would be possible to date it between the years 435 and 440, that is, the time when the Vandals took hold of a part of African land and when Quodvultdeus was exiled after the conquest of Carthage. With regards to the theme of the exile of the landowners, which took place especially after the conquest of Carthage, it is possible to speculate about the possible date to be the winter of the years 439–440.¹⁷⁴

170 AQH 8. 2–4 (CCL 60: 301).

171 Thorns, weeds, and fennel, being part of the biblical imagery (Psalm 36:1 f.; 91:8; Matthew 7:15–20; Mark 4:7; 4:18) are metaphorically applied to the Arians that besiege the Catholic faithful in Africa from all sides: see also González Salinero, *Poder*, 125 f.

172 AQH 6. 3–5 (CCL 60: 279 f.).

173 The 'good farmers' are identified with the land owners by Isola, *Cristiani*, 60.

174 This passage is indirectly connected with this dismal situation by González Salinero, *Poder*, 93 f.; Isola, *Cristiani*, 59 doubts the dating to the year 440, which is, however, possible because sea travel was not possible during winter and Quodvultdeus probably was still in Carthage.

B. Blumenkranz believes that AQH might have been the last education for catechumens before their baptism.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, A. Lukyn Williams believes that new believers should have been instructed through this sermon regarding the stance to be taken against paganism, Judaism, Manichaeism, and especially Arianism.¹⁷⁶ The truth is that the sermon's author quotes a liturgical dialogue where the baptiser asks the one being baptised about his faith.¹⁷⁷ As we will see, the self-determination with regards to other religious groups truly constituted a part of Quodvultdeus's baptismal catecheses. These, however, contain significantly more references to the circumstances of the baptism preparation, or particular liturgical rites accompanying the pre-baptismal preparation. The formation of Christian identity was not restricted to the catechumenate but took place in various forms also after baptism, whether in the form of biblical exegesis, occasional sermons for particular feast days, or theme-based sermons forced by certain circumstances. Similar sermons aimed against the pagans or heretic groups were preserved also, for example, from Augustine. Therefore, I conclude that the sermon could have been probably delivered in other circumstances than the baptismal context but took place in Africa afflicted by Vandal invasions between the years 435 and 440.

2.5 De tempore barbarico I

Only a few texts depict the dramatic situation of Africa endangered by the Vandals in such a vivid way as the two sermons called *On the Barbaric Times* (*De tempore barbarico I–II*; TB1–2; CPL 411–412). The *incipit* of the first sermon at the same time reveals also the theological explanation of the evils afflicting the Africans and approaching Carthage even more closely: 'Our Lord God warns that we should not neglect our sins when he shows his anger to be so great. He surely punishes the ones who are harmful, because he does not find anybody penitent.'¹⁷⁸ Why such harsh language? The context is important. A.V. Nazario dates the sermon to February 439, a few days before the feast of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas,¹⁷⁹ only a few months before Geiseric's capture of Car-

175 Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du Moyen Âge sur les juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris: Mouton, 1963), 20.

176 Arthur Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos. A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: CUP, 1935), 321; González Salinero, *Poder*, 64.

177 AQH 6. 7f. (CCL 60: 280).

178 TB1 1. 1 (CCL 60: 423): *Admonet Dominus Deus noster, non nos debere negligere nostra peccata, quando talem demonstrat iram suam. Ipse quippe iuste punit nocentem, quia nullum inuenit poenitentem.*

179 Nazzaro, 'La produzione omiletica', 55; TB1 5. 2 (CCL 60: 430).

thage.¹⁸⁰ People must have anticipated how significant a danger they were exposed to and that the Vandal aggression was probably not going to stop before the gates of the African capital. Perhaps that could have been why the bishop was taken aback by the paradox that, although in the African provinces their people's blood was being shed, Carthaginians continued to relish the blood-letting in the circus: 'And also in a time of such tribulations, when the entire province finds itself in the extremes of an agony, people go to the spectacles every day, every day human blood is shed in the world and the raving voices rattle in the circus.'¹⁸¹ Again we encounter the Carthaginian passion for the games, which knew no boundaries. Together with this, Quodvultdeus criticised those people who, when in a difficult situation, point with a reproachful finger at another instead of accusing themselves.¹⁸² At the same time, people pointlessly, even indifferently, wasted their efforts instead of mobilising against the enemy outside the gates.¹⁸³ The bishop, however, refused to be silent in resignation and declared that he was a tool proclaiming God's word to those good as well as those evil.¹⁸⁴ And to those people aware of agricultural principles, he was aiming to show that Christians, and not only clerics but also laity, should bring forth those fruits that are connected with penance.¹⁸⁵

Quodvultdeus's explanation is truly theological. At the same time, as A. Isola notes, he is revealed through this sermon as a Roman standing up to anything that is non-Catholic and non-Roman, even from a political point of view. Regardless of his motives being of a spiritual nature, they could not be apolitical because to gather the strength to face suffering and temptation entailed consequences that were spiritual, material, and also those concerning political prestige for his flock, both Catholics and Romans.¹⁸⁶ If the bishop wanted his entrusted ones to hold firm against this danger and temptation, he had to offer them, besides warnings, some positive alternative which would balance the slim material perspective.

Amidst the adversities, the preacher asks the question which must have crossed the minds of many: if the evil are affected by the calamity, why do

180 Simonetti, *La produzione letteraria*, 36 does not accept the attribution of the sermon to Quodvultdeus, ascribing it to an anonymous writer, who also wrote UQF and C.

181 TB11.11 (CCL 60: 424): *Ita in tantis angustis et in ipso fine rerum posita est uniuersa proincia, et cotidie frequentantur spectacula: sanguis hominum cotidie funditur in mundo, et insani-entium uoces crepitant in circo.*

182 TB1 1. 17–19 (CCL 60: 424).

183 Isola, *Cristiani*, 137.

184 TB1 2. 1 (CCL 60: 425).

185 TB1 2. 8 (CCL 60: 425).

186 Isola, *Cristiani*, 137 f.

the good have to suffer together with them?¹⁸⁷ No one is fully good, but to those trying to observe God's word, Quodvultdeus advises to keep being patient and expect the Lord's coming.¹⁸⁸ The main theme thus corresponds to the first dimension of love which he had outlined in QVC, that is, bearing evil, being tolerant.¹⁸⁹ He did not omit nostalgia for the past either, which seizes many in any difficult time: 'How good times were those our fathers had!'¹⁹⁰ He succeeds in demythologising this false image, aiming to show that the greatest danger for the believer is not the barbarians but his own self, for he can cause his own spiritual death.¹⁹¹ But he also offers a positive example, laying in front of the believers' eyes the figures of Christian heroes, that is, the martyrs, who were especially revered in Africa.¹⁹² Besides Perpetua and Felicitas, another example is Job, who resisted his wife's temptation, unlike Adam.¹⁹³ Paradise is another incentive, being the place of peace where the believer will not have to worry about the barbarians and enemies, and to where everyone is invited.¹⁹⁴ This invitation does not concern only the Catholics but also their mental adversaries, the pagans, the Jews, and the Arians, who are not excluded from the invitation despite a highly polemic tone.¹⁹⁵ The whole sermon is concluded with a warning to the heretics, that is, the Arian Vandals, who force the Catholic Christians to be rebaptised, thus causing death to those who had been brought to life by Christ in baptism.¹⁹⁶

2.6 De tempore barbarico II

The second sermon, called *De tempore barbarico II* (TB2), is also opened with the description of the current dismal situation, which corresponds to the immediate danger before the conquering of Carthage, or just after it:

An extensive sore wound requires an extensive medical remedy. Among so many massacres, destructions, captivities, and deaths—and we acknowledge that these have been brought on us because of our sins—beloved, what else should we do, when we desire to be set free from these

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- 187 TB1 3. 1 (CCL 60: 426).
 - 188 TB1 3. 6 (CCL 60: 426).
 - 189 TB1 3. 7; QVC 4 (CCL 60: 427. 369 f.).
 - 190 TB1 3. 21 (CCL 60: 428).
 - 191 TB1 4. 13 f. (CCL 60: 429).
 - 192 TB1 5. 1 (CCL 60: 430).
 - 193 TB1 5–6 (CCL 60: 430–432).
 - 194 TB1 7. 32 (CCL 60: 435).
 - 195 TB1 8. 1–6 (CCL 60: 435 f.).
 - 196 TB1 8. 8 f. (CCL 60: 436).

evils, if not to turn to our Creator to appease him with a respectable satisfaction? Because we have disdained his great patience for such a long time, he is fairly angry.¹⁹⁷

According to the preacher, the current calamities were caused by people's long-term disinterest in God, who became angry and brought people into this situation. As he perceives the relation between the way of human conduct and what happens to the person, he offers the listeners right at the beginning the amendment of conduct which will pacify the angry God.¹⁹⁸ God turned his face away from the Carthaginians because they had turned their faces away from him.¹⁹⁹ Thus, *Quodvultdeus* depicts what God's face looks like and, using anaphora, he vividly reveals that God's face is mercy, salvation/health, the greatest good, and peace.²⁰⁰

Doing this, he answers the current pagan objection that if the Romans had continued offering sacrifices to their protective gods, nothing like this would have happened.²⁰¹ It is not the evil Christian God causing the disaster either, but the cause of evil in the world is human conduct that is evil.²⁰² This does not, however, impact only on those acting in evil ways but also on the good ones—the presence of evil concerns 'us as well as you'.²⁰³ Furthermore, hope cannot be placed in that which is good in this world²⁰⁴—in both, *Quodvultdeus* follows Augustine's teaching about the mixed body of the Church and that earthly things should be used (*uti*) but only eternal things should be enjoyed (*frui*).²⁰⁵ Using a vivid dialogue, the preacher is trying to bring those listeners with an overly strong interest in the world to the truthful view fixed on eternity:

Where is what you loved? Where is what you feared so much? Where is what you do not want to leave behind? Where is Africa that was for all the

197 TB2 1. 1–3 (CCL 60: 473): *Magna plaga uulneris magnum exigit remedium medicaminis. Inter tantas strages, ruinas, captiuitates et mortes, quas meritis peccatorum nostrorum super nos uenire cognoscimus, quid nobis agendum est, dilectissimi, qui ex istis malis liberari cupimus, nisi ut ad creatorem nostrum conuersi eum digna satisfactione placemus? Quia eius multam et longam patientiam contempsimus, satis irascitur.*

198 TB2 1. 7 (CCL 60: 473).

199 TB2 2. 2 (CCL 60: 473 f.).

200 TB2 2. 8 f. (CCL 60: 474).

201 TB2 3. 1–4. 5 (CCL 60: 474–476).

202 TB2 4. 7 (CCL 60: 476).

203 TB2 5. 1 (CCL 60: 476).

204 TB2 5. 3 (CCL 60: 476).

205 Aug. *doct. chr.* 1. 3. 3–10. 10 (CCL 32: 8–12); Henry Chadwick, 'Frui—uti', in AL 2 (2004–2010), 70–75.

world a garden full of delights? Where are so many regions? Where are so many splendid cities? Perhaps, has Africa not been punished the more severely, the more resolutely she refused to receive discipline through correction, although other provinces improved? These things should be said rather with tears than with insults: even he who is touched in his pious sentiments with a compassion for them, cannot distance himself from these calamities.²⁰⁶

Quodvultdeus then continues with a very vivid depiction of the Vandal rage which weighs down upon people and that does not know human mercy.²⁰⁷ As a Christian he urges other Christians for this mercy and for being ready to help out the afflicted in any way and to act as humans would.²⁰⁸ One, however, does not become Christian for worldly benefit, but for the life per se that is given to man by Christ, who underwent in his life the same as that which the listeners are suffering.²⁰⁹ Earthly and eternal happiness are not compatible and therefore it is necessary to do penance when there is still time, before the end of the world comes.²¹⁰ And although the Catholic Christians are amongst animals—the heretics endangering them—it is not necessary to fear because Christ is the Good Shepherd, who will take care of his sheep.²¹¹ To him he turns in a long prayer, confessing Christ as ‘our David, shepherd of the sheep, our king who fights with Goliath’ and is ‘God’s power and God’s wisdom’, who defeated the teachings of philosophers represented by Plato, the vain rhetorics represented by Cicero, and is even able to overthrow Arians who try to rebaptise Catholic Christians.²¹²

2.7 Dubia

Besides these sermons and (pre)baptismal catecheses that R. Braun attributed to Quodvultdeus, there are also other sermons that might be dated to the time

206 TB2 5. 4–6 (CCL 60: 476f.): *Vbi est, quod amabatis? ubi est, quod pro magno tenebatis? ubi est, quod dimittere nolebatis? ubi est Africa, quae toto mundo fuit uelut hortus deliciarum? ubi tot regiones? ubi tantae splendidissimae ciuitates? Nonne tanto haec acerbius castigata est, quanto aliis prouinciis emendatis ista corrigendo noluit suscipere disciplinam? Lugendo ista potius dicta sint, quam insultando: neque enim alienus poterit esse ab istis calamitatibus, quem intus compassionis huius pius tangit affectus.*

207 TB2 5. 7–12 (CCL 60: 477).

208 TB2 6. 1, 6; 9. 3 (CCL 60: 478. 481).

209 TB2 7. 4–8 (CCL 60: 479).

210 TB2 10–11 (CCL 60: 481–484).

211 TB2 13. 1–11 (CCL 60: 484f.).

212 TB2 14. 1–11 (CCL 60: 485f.).

when Africa was in danger from the Vandals and that might be ascribed to the authors who were Augustine's 'disciples'.

The first of these, *Sermo de euangelio ubi Dominus de aqua uinum fecit* (CPL 416), a commentary on John 2:1–11, was identified by A. Wilmart, who carefully suggested Quodvultdeus to be its author.²¹³ E. Hauler, however, determined two years later this sermon's author to be in a more general sense a disciple or an imitator of Augustine.²¹⁴ The second sermon is also a biblical commentary, on Isaiah 5:1–9a, called *Sermo de cantico Isaiae* (CPL 417a). P.-M. Bogaert suggested that this sermon might also be attributed to Quodvultdeus.²¹⁵ A. Isola noticed certain connections between both sermons that might point towards a single author.²¹⁶

Besides these texts, there exist several sermons about which G. Morin believed that Quodvultdeus might also be their author: these are *Sermo de dominica oratione* (CPL 414), *Sermo de natale sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (CPL 415), and *Sermo in natali Domini* (CPL 417).²¹⁷ Besides this, J. Raasted expressed in his analysis of the fragmentary *sermo* 106 of Ps.-Augustine (CPL 417b) the belief that this text has a closeness to sermons attributed to Quodvultdeus.²¹⁸

However, attributing the abovementioned sermons amongst *dubia*, *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* conveys the current state of research, which does not generally accept Quodvultdeus's authorship of these texts, unlike other aforementioned sermons. Although these sermons provide a witness about the life of Christians in post-Augustinian Africa, I will not further consider them in this research.

2.8 *Prebaptismal and Baptismal Catecheses*

The greatest part of Quodvultdeus's homiletic writings consists of sermons dedicated to the catecheses of catechumens or the newly baptised. This group of sermons is undoubtedly an expression of the main responsibility of the Bishop of Carthage, that is, teaching new Christians. It is necessary to place the study of these sermons even more firmly in the context of the ancient catechumenate. Thus, it makes sense here to note that this regards altogether

213 André Wilmart, 'Un sermon africain sur les noces de Cana, passé sus le nom de saint Augustin', RB 42 (1930), 5–18.

214 Edmund Hauler, 'Die dem hl. Augustin zugeschriebene Predigt über die Verwandlung von Wasser in Wein', WS 50 (1932), 129–151.

215 Bogaert, 109–135.

216 Isola, *Cristiani*, 13.

217 Morin, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini tractatus*, 181–186. 196–199; MA 1: 723, 750.

218 Raasted, 108–115.

nine sermons: a sermon *De cantico novo* (CN),²¹⁹ three sermons *De symbolo* (S1–3),²²⁰ a sermon *Contra Iudaeos, Paganos et Arrianos* (CIPA),²²¹ a sermon *De ultima quarta feria* (UQF),²²² a sermon *De cataclysmo* (C),²²³ and finally two sermons *De accedentibus ad gratiam* (A1–2).²²⁴ As will be shown, these sermons were used for pre-baptismal and baptismal catecheses, thus being the very core of this work. And because it is at the same time a unique witness of the form of the catechumenate and the baptismal catechesis in Carthage in the 430s, it appears to be more suitable to leave a closer introduction and analysis of these sermons for the place that they held within the frame of the candidates' preparation for baptism. This is the content of the following parts of this book.

219 CCL 60: 381–392.

220 CCL 60: 303–363.

221 CCL 60: 225–258.

222 CCL 60: 393–406.

223 CCL 60: 421–437.

224 CCL 60: 441–458.

The African Tradition of Preparation for Baptism

From the very beginning of Christianity, teaching was one of a bishop's main tasks, being the explanation of biblical texts and catechesis connected with the central events of Christian life; that is, it was connected especially with baptism, which signifies the transition from the old life to the new and the joining to Christ and his body, the Church, and the hope for salvation. This task of bishops was a part of their mission to care for 'entrusted souls' and their salvation. Preaching and teaching were a part of ἐπισκοπή, that is, 'being awake' or taking care of the Church as a whole. Like shepherds, ancient as well as current bishops are in charge of the whole 'flock' and its unity. This was their main task and the reason for the existence of the episcopal office *per se*.

The care for the salvation of individuals and the unity of the whole Church becomes apparent as being urgent and extremely difficult, if not impossible, precisely in times of adversity and persecution, such as the one encountered by the African Catholic Christians in the 430s. It might not be a complete coincidence that most of the preserved sermons that are attributed to Quodvultdeus were mostly those focusing on the *curriculum* of the catechumens undergoing the last stage of pre-baptismal preparation. These sermons or catecheses delivered during the liturgy became a tool for him, as *episcopus*, to prepare the baptism candidates for life in the Church as a minority in society and being persecuted, for life in a world changing in front of their eyes that did not offer many certainties. These pre-baptismal catecheses aimed at clearly defining and strengthening the new identity of the new Catholic Christians and their affiliation to the 'mother Church' and at the same time set the relationships to those who are *extra*, that is, to the non-Catholic Christians, especially the Arians, and other religious groups, particularly the Jews and the pagans.

The turn of the fifth century is often considered to be the golden period of Christian antiquity. Fifth century Africa, the history and state of which I have sketched out in Chapters One and Two, was an immensely complex world, not only politically and economically but also socially and with regard to relationships. It is not a mere background for setting Quodvultdeus's sermons, but a very diverse situation in religion to which the bishop of Carthage reacted and led the Church entrusted to him in a difficult time.

For the right contextualisation of these pre-baptismal and baptismal sermons, it is first necessary to discuss the form and the course of the catechuminate and the baptismal rites of the early Church, especially in Africa and more

specifically in Carthage. For Quodvultdeus, as well as for the whole African Church, the greatest inspiration was Augustine of Hippo, influencing the whole generation of his friends—bishops, among these also Quodvultdeus. By all accounts, Quodvultdeus loved Augustine, his sermons, and his theology to such an extent that the sermons now attributed to him were preserved in manuscript tradition under the name of his teacher. It is thus Augustine who is the background for analysing Quodvultdeus's pre-baptismal sermons in two aspects. As with the significant majority of Christians of the time, Augustine was baptised as an adult and a difficult and dramatic path had led to his baptism, depicted in his *Confessions*. Thus, the journey of the catechumen Augustine should not be omitted. Most of his life, however, was as a bishop, who prepared newcomers to the Church for their baptism—from the initial catechesis to the mystagogic catechesis following baptism. At the same time, the form of baptismal preparation in Hippo Regius reflects to a significant extent the general Catholic practice of the whole of Roman Africa. The practice of baptismal preparation could not have differed significantly in Augustine's episcopal city from the African metropolis Carthage and similarly, the practice could not have shifted significantly between the first three decades of the fifth century and the fourth decade when Quodvultdeus was the Carthaginian bishop. The resemblance of the catechumenate rites in Carthage and Hippo should not, however, tempt the researcher to harmonise the documents pertaining to both traditions. The third chapter thus focuses upon the baptismal preparation in Hippo Regius as it can be reconstructed, especially from Augustine's writings.

1 Education Related to Baptism in Antiquity

Ancient Christian texts from the second and third centuries show the Church to be separated from the rest of the world by a deep chasm.¹ At her beginnings, the Church declared herself as the antithesis of the world: belonging to the Church meant not belonging to the world. After all, when the New Testament writings say about someone that he 'loved the world' they mean that he had left the path to salvation, that is, the path leading to life, and left the Church, and the Father's love did not dwell in him anymore.² The first Christian generations must have appeared to others to be a sect. It is not surprising that as

1 Andrew Louth, *Fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani: Conversion, Community, and Christian Identity in Late Antiquity*, in *Being Christian in Late Antiquity*, ed. C. Harrison, C. Humfress, and I. Sandwell (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 112.

2 2 Timothy 4:9; 1 John 2:15, etc.

early as Tacitus in his depiction of Nero's persecution after the fire of Rome in the year 64, presents the main reason for reporting the Christians to be their 'hatred towards the human race'.³ The world was simply somehow alien⁴ to the first Christian generations and although they lived in the world they were not of the world,⁵ living in a way as not to be affected by the spirit of the world.⁶

The missionary efforts of these generations in any case had to face the dilemma of how not to draw this spirit of the world into the Church. As early as Pliny the Younger, at the beginning of the second century, was the testimony in his famous letter to the emperor Trajan that it was not difficult to encounter in Bithynia former Christians who had left this faith.⁷ The African writer Tertullian in his *Apologeticum* depicts Christian hope and teaching but even he as a former pagan had to admit, "These are points at which we, too, laughed in times past. We are from your own ranks: Christians are made, not born!"⁸ Despite this, Tertullian would probably not be particularly pleased if all the pagans were to join the Church—he unintentionally agreed with the philosopher Celsus who, a generation earlier, pinchingly commented in Alexandria, 'If all people wanted to be Christians, the Christians would no longer want them.'⁹

It seems that in the mutual relationship between the Christians and the world there were many concerns and suspicion on the Church's part, and also her experience with some Christians' lukewarmness and apostasy led around the end of the second and beginning of the third centuries to the creation of a programme of careful preparation to precede reception into the Church and baptism. This is called the catechumenate.¹⁰ It is possible that as early as around 160, Justin mentioned in passing the existence of a period when the candidates for entering the Church were to receive instruction and were also to adopt the Christian way of life.¹¹ In his treatise *On baptism*, Tertullian talks about how 'baptism ought not to be rashly granted'.¹² Those seeking it had to avoid the idolatry of the surrounding Roman culture and to prove their willing-

3 Tac. 15. 44 (ed. Goelzer 491).

4 *Ep. Diogn.* 1. 1 (ed. Lindemann—Paulsen 306).

5 *Ep. Diogn.* 6. 3 (ed. Lindemann—Paulsen 312).

6 *1 Clem* 2. 5 (ed. Lindemann—Paulsen 82).

7 Plin. Jun. *ep.* 10. 96 (ed. Melmoth ii. 402).

8 Tert. *Apol.* 18. 4 (tr. Daly 54).

9 Celsus in Orig. *cc* 3. 9 (tr. Chadwick 135).

10 The vast literature on the catechumenate in the Antiquity was collected by Pignot, 'Questioning', 453–455 n. 2.

11 Just. *1 apol.* 61. 2 (SC 507: 288).

12 Tert. *bapt.* 18 (ed. Evans 37).

ness and ability to maintain the moral standards of the Christian faith.¹³ They not only received doctrinal instruction, but were also required to maintain a period 'with frequent prayers, fastings, bendings of the knee, and all-night vigils, along with the confession of all their former sins'.¹⁴ In 202/3 it was witnessed in northern Africa that the persecution of Christians was not restricted to the baptised but that catechumens figure also among the imprisoned and the martyred: 'A number of young catechumens were arrested, Revocatus and his fellow slave Felicitas, Saturninus and Secundulus, and with them, Vibia Perpetua, a newly married woman of good family and upbringing. Her mother and father were still alive, and one of her two brothers was a catechumen like herself.'¹⁵

A passage from Origen's response to the pagan Celsus is considered to be one of the oldest testimonies of the existence of the catechumenate:

But as far as they can, Christians previously examine the souls of those who want to hear them, and test them individually beforehand; when before entering the community the hearers seem to have devoted themselves to the desire to live a good life, then they introduce them. They privately appoint one class consisting of recent beginners who are receiving elementary introduction and have not yet received the sign that they have been purified, and another class of those who, as far as they are able, make it their set purpose to desire nothing other than those things of which Christians approve. Among the latter class some are appointed to inquire into the lives and conduct of those who want to join the community in order that they may prevent those who indulge in secret sins from coming to their common gathering; those who do not do this they wholeheartedly receive and make them better every day.¹⁶

This long passage contains all of the important elements of baptismal preparation that can be found in various ecclesiastical areas also in the following centuries. Origen talks about the initial testing of the candidates, whether their decision is genuine and they truly desire the Christian life in full and not only in part. The candidates then received fundamental education in the faith, while at the same time there exists also a more advanced group which should adopt

13 J. Patout Burns—Robin M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: the Development of its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2014), 168 f.

14 Tert. *bapt.* 20 (ed. Evans 40 f.).

15 *Pass. Perp. Fel.* 2 (ed. Musurillo 108 f.).

16 Orig. cc 3. 51 (tr. Chadwick 163).

the Christian way of acting, with all that this contains.¹⁷ Also, the aspect of scrutinies exists here to enquire whether the candidate's life is coherent, and only when it is without blemish would they possibly be admitted to the sacred gathering, that is, to partake in the sacraments of initiation. These milestones might therefore be considered to be the entrance, a basic instruction in Christian teaching, the advanced phase of adopting the Christian life, the scrutinies, and finally the baptismal rites as such.

This structure of the catechumenate was also connected with the Church's experience that although conversion might have been completely sudden and full, for many Christians it was rather a long-term process or journey of conversion which was not without a struggle. Three dimensions of the catechumenate were to help on this path: instruction about Christian teaching, that is, the intellectual formation; the abandoning of the old way of life and adopting a new life, being the moral formation; and, finally, also the symbolic and liturgical dimension, when the candidates had to undergo various rites of passage to join the new family and accept their new home. On the beginning of the journey of the catechumenate there was thus the decision to abandon the world, and its end was then incorporation into the redemptive community of the Church.¹⁸

This is witnessed also by the ancient Church orders, including the *Apostolic Tradition*. This document can be considered 'an aggregation of material' that possibly reflects the practice of the churches of various geographical regions and historical periods from mid-second to mid-fourth centuries. Nonetheless, it might be our only sources that might show how such an initial probe of the newcomers might have looked in this period.¹⁹ This probe focused especially on the baptismal candidates' lifestyles. Did the candidate have a mistress? Was a

17 It is even possible that forty days of fasting in Orig. *HLV* 10. 2 (SC 287: 138–140) correspond to the preparation of this more advanced group, as a similar practice is mentioned also by *Can. Hipp.* 12 (PO 31/2: 364) and might suggest that such a practice in Egypt really existed: see Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999), 58f.

18 Thomas M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 2–4.

19 Paul F. Bradshaw et al., *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2002), 14. The attribution of *Apostolic tradition* (TA) to Hippolytus of Rome and its dating to Rome around the year 235 was challenged at two symposia organised by the Patristic Institute Augustinianum in Rome: see *Ricerche Ricerche su Ippolito*, ed. V. Loi et al. (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1977) and *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, ed. P. Testini et al. (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1989). See also Bryan D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent* (Aldershot; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2006), 28–31.

slave trying to please his master with his interest in Christianity? And regarding his career, if he was a gladiator, a charioteer, idol-sculptor, actor, brothel owner, theatre organiser, or a town civil servant, then with regards to immorality or a relationship to a pagan cult, his acceptance was impossible. Likewise, a possessed person was not allowed to become a catechumen either. Similarly, the document prompts the rejection of prostitutes, eunuchs, magicians, and sorcerers, while other professions, such as teachers or soldiers, were to be accepted only under specifically-stated conditions.²⁰ By all accounts, to be accepted to the catechumenate was not a sure thing.

After those interested in Christianity were accepted among the catechumens, they became hearers—they were to ‘hear the Word for three years’.²¹ In reality, the length of the catechumenate might have varied significantly, especially in connection with the development and character improvement of the listener.²² In the case of serious offences, the catechumenate might have been extended, even up to one’s death.²³ ‘Hearing the Word’ might have contained catechesis introducing the Church teachings but more likely included partaking in the first part of the Eucharistic celebration,²⁴ at the end of which the catechumens were dismissed in many liturgical traditions:²⁵ *Apostolic Tradition* sought their tutor-catechist to lay his hands on them at this time.²⁶ In this period the catechumens also prayed, separately from the baptised Christians.²⁷

The following stage, different from the previous ‘listening stage’ was the moment when the catechumens were chosen to be baptised—they were called φωτιζόμενοι (those who were going to be ‘illuminated’ by baptism), *electi*, or *competentes* (chosen ones, those who met the requirements for baptism). With this step the scrutinies were connected, being another probe as to whether they had led a virtuous life during their catechumenate and had carried out good deeds, especially towards widows and the sick. During this period, they were to

20 TA 15f. (ed. Bradshaw 92–95).

21 TA 17. 1 (ed. Bradshaw 96). Compare to the three-year planting allegory in Clem. Alex. *strom.* 2. 18. 96.

22 TA 17. 2 (ed. Bradshaw 96).

23 *Conc. Elib.* cann. 4, 73, 42 (ed. Gori 42, 66, and 56).

24 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 41 f.

25 Paul F. Bradshaw, ‘The Gospel and the Catechumenate in the Third Century’, *JThS* 50 (1999), 143–152, however, argues that hearing the biblical readings and the Gospels might have been reserved to a later stage of preparation.

26 TA 19. 1 (ed. Bradshaw 102 f.).

27 TA 18. 1 (ed. Bradshaw 100).

be exorcised daily²⁸ and at the end an exorcism was to be carried out also by a bishop. Even in this period it was possible that baptismal candidates might be refused.²⁹

The final phase took place immediately before the baptism when the catechumens were to wash carefully (during the whole of the second phase of the catechumenate they probably did not visit the public baths) and fast. On the Saturday preceding baptism³⁰ they were to be brought to the bishop, pray kneeling, and the bishop was to lay his hands on them and 'exorcise every foreign spirit, that they flee from them and not return to them ever again. And when he has finished exorcising, let him blow into them. And when he has sealed their foreheads and their ears and nostrils, let him raise them up.'³¹ After this exorcism connected with insufflation and the marking of the bodily senses, an all-night vigil followed, connected with catechesis.³² After this, the baptismal rites per se took place, including the renunciation of the devil and the profession of faith in God, the baptism itself, anointing with oil, and the first celebration of the Eucharist together with other believers.³³

Later centuries preserved in essence a similar structure of the baptism candidates' preparation and many elements of the individual rites. In principle, the catechumenate is divided into two periods where the second is the period of immediate preparation for baptism during Lent before the Easter when baptism was to be given to the candidates. The form of the catechumenate of the third century and the rigour required from the baptism applicants should not be idealised by readers today. For these requirements did not guarantee that the Christians would stand firm in all situations that life laid before them. For even in Africa a number of lapsed Christians during Decius's persecution (250/51) can witness to this: the Carthaginian bishop complained that so many Chris-

28 Daily exorcising the elect is attested only in the Eastern traditions from the fourth century onwards: Cyr. Hier. *cat.* 1. 5f; Egeria 46. 1; Ioh. Chrys. *bapt. hom.* 2. 12.

29 TA 20. 1–4 (ed. Bradshaw 104).

30 TA does not state that baptism took place on Easter: Bradshaw et al., *Apostolic Tradition*, 110.

31 TA 20. 7 (ed. Bradshaw 106).

32 TA 20. 5, 7–9 (ed. Bradshaw 104–106). This rite is not attested elsewhere for the third century, it is found in Ambr. *sacr.* 1. 2. 4–8 (SAEMO 17: 44–46).

33 TA 21. 1–37 (ed. Bradshaw 112–122); Robin M. Jensen, *Living Water: Images, Symbols, and Settings of Early Christian Baptism* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 5–41 collects the evidence of baptismal rite in Christian art of this period; nevertheless a problem of interpretation of this evidence exists, as the images from catacombs 'neither accurately illustrate the scriptural account of Jesus' baptism by John, nor portray what could have been contemporary ritual practice' (p. 26).

tians came to offer sacrifices that the authorised officials must have sent many of them home and let them sacrifice the following day.³⁴

It was the abovementioned moral rigorism that was typical from the beginning of African Christianity, as was shown in Tertullian's writings. It was manifested by the almost uncompromising attitude not only to lukewarm or fallen Christians but especially to Roman culture, that is, the outside world.³⁵ The rift between the Church and the rest of the 'world', between light and darkness, was especially sharp in Africa. More than anywhere else, the Christians in Africa were convinced that being baptised was an indispensable condition for salvation. Just the term originating in Africa that called baptism *sacramentum*, that is, a military oath, reveals the seriousness of adherence to the Church and the rejection of the world and its ruler, the devil. More than anywhere else, the African Church placed a liturgical emphasis on the rejection of Satan and on the scrutinies of the baptismal candidates.³⁶ But similarly the affiliation to the community of God's people, to the Church, outside of which there is no salvation (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*) was important for salvation.³⁷ This Church was very unambiguously and strictly defined and was understood as a visible community of believers around their bishop.³⁸

Such sharp borders of the Church naturally had an influence on the perception of all believers who showed outwardly a certain defect either in teaching or in life. It was as early as in Cyprian's time in the middle of the third century when heretics in Africa were perceived as those who do not belong to the Church and, actually, were not even Christians—and if someone was born into a heretical group, a new baptism was required for his or her reception into the Church.³⁹ When in this period a great persecution took place under Decius, with a great apostasy of many Christians, the African Church sought through a difficult process the path to the decision that these morally-fallen Christians were reconcilable with the Church. The matter of the moral profile of Christians was pressingly brought up again after Diocletian's persecutions, when the issue as to what extent a sinner might belong to the Church and remain in his office evolved into the long-term Donatist schism. The question

34 Cypr. *laps.* 8 (CSEL 3. 1: 242).

35 Barnes, *Tertullian*, 62.

36 Finn, *Early Christian Baptism*, 112.

37 Regarding the *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in patristics, see Bernard Sesboüe, «Hors de l'Église pas de salut»: *histoire d'une formule et problèmes d'interprétation* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2004); Sandra Mazzolini, *Chiesa e salvezza: l'extra Ecclesiam nulla salus in epoca patristica* (Città del Vaticano: Urbaniana UP, 2008).

38 For example, Cypr. *ep.* 66. 8 (CSEL 3.2: 744); Finn, *Early Christian Baptism*, 130.

39 Cypr. *epp.* 69–70 (CSEL 3.2: 749–770).

of who the true (or ideal) Church was and who belonged to her was a key question for African Christians, undoubtedly influencing also the perception of baptism and the preparations for it.⁴⁰ This firm definition with regards to heretic groups might of course have influenced also the intensity of the initiatory rites of the catechumenate and baptism itself in northern Africa, as M. Pignot claims;⁴¹ however, the roots of the extraordinarily intensive rites connected with baptism and the preparation for it can be found at the very beginning of African Christianity, in its definition with regards to the surrounding pagan society, and also in the experience of martyrdom in the African Church.

Only later, from Optatus of Milevis in the 370s and then especially under the Carthaginian bishop Aurelius and Hippo's bishop Augustine at the beginning of the fifth century did the African Church begin arriving much more certainly at the belief that was in accordance with the teaching held by the Catholic Church in other areas, especially in Italy, which at the same time, however, differed from the stance of the greatest authority of the African Church, Cyprian. In Augustine's teaching we find present the belief that if the baptiser or the conferrer of another sacrament intends to do what the Church does then the moral character of the conferrer does not influence the validity of the baptism or other sacraments. The baptism leaves an irreversible sign (*character*) in the baptised, thanks to which the gifts connected with the baptism might revive in the believer even in the case where he never developed the baptismal graces or lost them during his life.⁴² As the primary agent of the baptism is the Trinity, the baptisms carried out in all schismatic and heretic groups are valid when they hold the correct understanding of the Trinity and the one coming into the Church who has been baptised cannot be rebaptised.⁴³

In order for the baptism to bring forth its fruits, specifically the fruits of conversion and authentic change in the life of the baptised, a thorough baptismal preparation was intended to help. This achieved change was not only symbolic but also an ontologically understood change, and consisted in the person, as a part of fallen humanity and corrupted by Adam's inheritance, being incorporated into Christ, the new Adam, finding in him a true and renewed humanity. The baptised Christian regained the ability to perceive God, himself, and the

40 Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *Histoire du catéchuménat dans l'Eglise ancienne, Initiations aux Pères de l'Église* (Paris: Cerf, 2007), 267 f.

41 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 172.

42 Ernst Dassmann, 'Character', in AL 1 (1986–1994), 837; Vittorino Grossi, 'Baptismus', in AL 1 (1986–1994), 583–591.

43 Optat. c. *Parm.* 5. 1 (CSEL 26: 120).

world around with an 'eyesight' that was inaccessible to him in the fallen state. This spiritual sense enabled him to look not only on the surface of reality but to grasp also the inner essence of things, inaccessible to physical sight.⁴⁴

2 Augustine's Catechumenate

This catechumenate changed a lot from the rigorism of the third century, witnessed by Tertullian, the *Apostolic Tradition*, and other documents, with the turn of the fourth century and the recognition of the Church by the Roman authorities. The story of the most famous African Christian, who became known as Saint Augustine (354–430), can easily illustrate this transformation.

Augustine's parents—and especially his pious mother Monica—had decided to make him a catechumen at an early age. Augustine recounts that he 'was regularly signed with the cross and given his salt even from the womb of his mother'.⁴⁵ It seems that this rite of signing the forehead with a cross and giving salt to taste was repeated during childhood as a kind of spiritual inoculation that would keep the child safe from demonic forces.⁴⁶ It was not common to baptise small children in this era, unless they became seriously ill and there would be a danger that they would die without baptism, which was believed to be necessary for salvation. This happened also to Augustine and, when he became seriously ill, his mother made arrangements for his baptism. Nonetheless, just when he unexpectedly recovered, his baptism was postponed again.⁴⁷ The reason behind delaying his baptism was the concern about 'the many towering waves of temptation' that 'seemed to be looming in the period beyond boyhood'.⁴⁸

But this does not mean that the catechumenate would still be a time of conscious spiritual growth in preparation for the baptism to be received. It appears that Augustine did not receive any systematic religious education, as his early, not particularly perfect, ideas about Christian teachings also attest.⁴⁹ Neither

44 Louth, 113.

45 Aug. conf. 1. 11. 17 (CCL 27: 9; tr. Boulding 50): *signabar iam signo crucis eius et condiebar eius sale iam inde ab utero matris meae*.

46 Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 41.

47 Aug. conf. 1. 11. 17 (CCL 27: 10).

48 Aug. conf. 1. 11. 18 (CCL 27: 10; WSA 1/1: 52).

49 Maria Boulding, 'Introduction', in Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (WSA 1/1; Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997), 14. Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 77 f. notices, though, that Augustine's stress on the mediocrity of his Christian education before his adhesion to Manichaeism

was he expected to live as a Christian. Later, Augustine criticised this attitude of people towards catechumens: 'Let him be, let him do as he likes, he is not baptised yet!'⁵⁰ This means that the catechumenate was not anymore generally perceived as a period of Christian instruction, nor as a time when the candidate of baptism should prove his ability to live as was required of Christians. During his student years in Carthage, Augustine, as a catechumen, attended the theatre, dipped into astrology, and chased women.⁵¹ Sometime during this period he even started to live with a woman. Although she bore him a son, Adeodatus, she was of a lower class, and Roman law prohibited him from marrying her.⁵² At this time, also, Augustine became a 'hearer' with the Manichaeans, while still a catechumen of the Church.⁵³ However, his life looked quite orderly from a Christian point of view, and he still attended Church services and turned to the Scriptures for answers: even being a Manichaean, he seemed never to be so distant from Christianity as he himself underlines.⁵⁴

His profession of teacher of rhetoric in Carthage and later in Rome opened up for him a promising career in public administration. Full of these 'ambitions of the world',⁵⁵ Augustine came to Milan and as many other pagans, heretics, and catechumens, he joined the Christian faithful in church for the service of readings, prayers, and preaching that was the first part of the Eucharist. There he listened to Ambrose's sermons, at first only for professional reasons, as the bishop was renowned for his rhetorical skills as well.⁵⁶ Even so, later he became impressed by the way Bishop Ambrose interpreted the Bible and especially the Old Testament in his sermons addressed to the people, where he applied a spiritual, that is, allegorical reading of the sacred texts. This allegorical exegesis helped him remove the first of the obstacles he had against Catholic doctrine.⁵⁷ Due to other moments described by Augustine in his *Confessions*, he came to sever his links with the Manichaeans and to remain a catechumen

has to be understood in the context of polemics against the Manichaeans that was eventually meant to weaken his opponents: see also David Vopřada, 'Quodvultdeus' Sermons on the Creed: A Reassessment of His Polemics against the Jews, Pagans, and Arians', *VoxP* 37/68 (2017), 355–369.

50 Aug. *conf.* 1. 11. 18 (CCL 27: 10; WSA 1/1: 51): *Sine illum, faciat: nondum enim baptizatus est.*

51 Aug. *conf.* 3. 1. 1–3. 2. 4 (CCL 27: 27–29).

52 Aug. *conf.* 4. 2. 2 (CCL 27: 40 f.).

53 Aug. *conf.* 3. 3. 6–3. 7. 12 (CCL 27: 29–33).

54 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 79.

55 Aug. *conf.* 10. 36. 59 (CCL 27: 187).

56 Aug. *conf.* 5. 13. 23–5. 14. 24; 6. 5. 7–8 (CCL 27: 70 f., 77–79).

57 Aug. *conf.* 6. 3. 3–4 (CCL 27: 74 f.). For Ambrose's exegesis, see especially Luigi F. Pizzolato, *La dottrina esegetica di sant'Ambrogio* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1978).

of the Catholic Church until he would see things more clearly.⁵⁸ However, his change from a 'politic catechumen' to an earnest one was still slow.⁵⁹ Only after other turmoil, after hearing powerful stories about other prominent converts, such as Marius Victorinus, or Anthony the Egyptian,⁶⁰ there came the famous garden story with the mysterious voice of a child singing the refrain *tolle, lege*— 'pick it up and read!' Only then was Augustine assured by the words of Paul's letter to the Romans, and peace came that hurried him on his way towards baptism.⁶¹

During the autumn of 386, Augustine formally requested of Ambrose that he be baptised. He also asked him advice on what to read to prepare better for baptism.⁶² After his stay at Cassiciacum, where he retreated with his mother and friends, he could start the final preparation: 'The time arrived for me to give in my name for baptism, so we left the country and moved back to Milan.'⁶³ Together, Augustine, his friend Alypius, and his son Adeodatus became 'petitioners' (*competentes*) and began to be 'schooled' in God's 'doctrine'.⁶⁴ Augustine, however, does not specify in his *Confessions* or other works the content of this Lenten preparation for baptism, apart from his excitement and a general doctrine of God.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, from Ambrose's works and Paulinus's biography of Ambrose, we know some details. The bishop himself taught the *competentes*, and his catechesis made up part of a worship service that included biblical readings and psalms and took place twice a day, Monday to Friday, in the morning and the afternoon. The main focus of the catechesis was moral teaching based on the books of Genesis and Proverbs.⁶⁶ It would not be enough to know what to believe and what to do as a Christian: Ambrose tried to convince the 'petitioners' that they should convert this theory into practice. In his *De Helia et*

58 Aug. *conf.* 5. 14. 24 (CCL 27: 71).

59 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 90.

60 Aug. *conf.* 8. 2. 3–8. 5. 12 (CCL 27: 114–121).

61 Aug. *conf.* 8. 12, 29–30 (CCL 27: 131f.).

62 Aug. *conf.* 9. 5. 13 (CCL 27: 140).

63 Aug. *conf.* 9. 6. 14 (CCL 27: 140; tr. Boulding 219): *Inde ubi tempus aduenit, quo me nomen dare oportet, relicto rure Mediolanium remeauimus.*

64 Aug. *conf.* 9. 6. 14 (tr. Boulding 219).

65 Aug. *f. et op.* 6. 9; *an. quant.* 34. 77 (CSEL 41: 44; 89: 225).

66 Ambr. *myst.* 1. 1 (CSEL 73: 89); F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of Saint Ambrose* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), i. 337. Marcia Colish, *Ambrose's Patriarchs: Ethics for the Common Man* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 13–29 discusses why Ambrose used the lives of Patriarchs as a template for his Lenten catechesis.

ieiunio, he exhorts them to follow a rigorous discipline and compares them to wrestlers who should train every day, to adhere to a strict diet, and also abstain from sex.⁶⁷

During Lent, perhaps on some of the Sundays, the *competentes* went through the ‘mysteries of the scrutinies’, when their bodies were examined: ‘There was a search—lest anything unclean still cling to the body of anyone of you. Using exorcism we sought and brought about a sanctifying not only of your body, but of your soul as well.’⁶⁸ The physical examination was used in the belief that the Holy Spirit can use physical manifestations to make known the true intentions of one’s heart.⁶⁹

On the Sunday before Easter, the bishop delivered the baptismal creed to the candidates and gave a brief explanation of it: ‘It is now the time and the day for us to hand over the Symbol: a Symbol which is a spiritual seal, a Symbol which is our heart’s meditation and, as it were, an ever-present guard, a treasure within our breast.’⁷⁰ This was a practice different from the East where we find Cyril of Jerusalem or Theodore of Mopsuestia using the creed as a pattern for most of the baptismal catecheses.⁷¹ Ambrose handed the creed over to the *competentes* only at this moment. He showed the creed as something precious that has to be interiorised and guarded in the believer’s heart. He presented the creed as a joint composition of the twelve apostles, who wished to summarise the faith in order that anyone could remember its content. Then Ambrose had his *competentes* sign themselves with the sign of the cross, and recite the creed for the first time.⁷² After a general introduction to the doctrine on the Trinity and the Incarnation, he recited it again.⁷³ Only now did an explanation phrase by phrase come, and after the *competentes* signed themselves again with the cross, Ambrose recited the creed for the third time.⁷⁴ Now the bishop stressed

67 Ambr. *Hel.* 21. 79 (SAEMO 6: 118); Craig A. Satterlee, *Ambrose of Milan’s Method of Mystagogical Preaching* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 149.

68 Ambr. *expl. symb.* 1 (CSEL 73: 3; tr. Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 96): *Inquisitum est, ne immunditia in corpore alicuius haereret. Per exorcismum non solum corporis, sed etiam animae quaesita et adhibita est sanctificatio.*

69 Satterlee, 152.

70 Ambr. *expl. symb.* 1 (CSEL 73: 3; tr. Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 96): *Nunc tempus est et dies, ut symbolum tradamus, quod symbolum est spiritale signaculum, quod symbolum cordis est nostri meditato et quasi semper praesens custodia, certe thesaurus pectoris nostri.*

71 Cyr. *Hier. cat.* 4–18; Theod. *Mops. cat.* 1–10.

72 Ambr. *expl. symb.* 3 (CSEL 73: 4).

73 Ambr. *expl. symb.* 3–5 (CSEL 73: 4–8).

74 Ambr. *expl. symb.* 5–8 (CSEL 73: 8–11).

that this creed cannot be written down and that the *competentes* should say it every day, so that they might enjoy its protection of their mind and body against demonic temptation. Finally, he asked them to repeat it silently, so that nobody outside the Church would hear it. Ambrose does not mention the 'giving back of the creed' (*redditio symboli*), but he does state that the candidates 'have yet to deliver it,' most probably during the baptismal rites.⁷⁵

Augustine was baptised, together with Alypius and Adeodatus, by Ambrose on Easter night 24/25 April 387.⁷⁶ His description of reaching this goal of his long journey could not be much shorter: 'And so we were baptised, and all our dread about our earlier lives dropped away from us.'⁷⁷ The reason for this reticence is, again, the *disciplina arcani*, which did not permit speaking about the core of Christian doctrine and celebration to those who were not yet baptised. In Milan, this practice was observed by Ambrose and the meaning of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist was left to be explained in the mystagogical catecheses during Easter Week after the baptism.⁷⁸ Being baptised, Augustine finally became a Christian faithful (*fidelis*). It took him more than twenty-five years to complete all of the stages of the catechumenate that he had entered as a child. His experience of the catechumenate shaped his ministry and his dealing with newcomers to the Church.

This experience of Augustine's catechumenate, as narrated in his *Confessions*, was not merely egocentric and did not want to attract his reader's attention to his life story. The aim of his *Confessions* was to bring his reader to confess, that is, to proclaim God's greatness and his working in Creation, and especially in the reader's life.⁷⁹ Describing his conversion, he strives to move his readers to conversion.⁸⁰ Even various recollections of his youth, being a hearer with the Manichaeans, experimenting with astrology and frequenting games in the circus, his living with a concubine, or his worldly ambitions are here to remind his reader that even if he finds himself in a similar life situation, there is still the possibility of finding the peace of the soul that Augustine himself had found.

75 Ambr. *expl. symb.* 9 (CSEL 73: 11 f.); *reddere illud habetis*; Satterlee, 153–155.

76 The sequence of baptismal rites in Ambrose's Milan is described, among others, by Satterlee, 156–185.

77 Aug. *conf.* 9. 6. 14 (CCL 27: 141; tr. WSA 1/1: 219); *baptizati sumus et fugit a nobis sollicitudo uitae praeteritae*.

78 David Vopřada, *La mistagogia del Commento al Salmo 118 di sant'Ambrogio* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2016), 83.

79 Aug. *conf.* 1. 1. 1; 10. 1. 1 (CCL 27: 1, 155); for Augustine's term *confessio*, Joseph Ratzinger, 'Originalität und Überlieferung in Augustins Begriff der *confessio*', REA 3/4 (1957), 375–392 remains a classic.

80 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 76.

3 The African Catechumenate according to Augustine's Works

Beyond doubt, Augustine played a significant and critical role in Quodvultdeus's personal and intellectual formation. His understanding of the catechumenate, its institutions, and rites undeniably influenced how the future bishop of Carthage instructed his catechumens who decided to receive baptism in the troubled years of the Vandal invasion. To understand the specifics and the originality of Quodvultdeus's pre-baptismal catecheses, it is necessary to set the stage and to understand this background of Augustine's witness of the catechumenate in the decades before Quodvultdeus's episcopal ministry. The catechumenate in Augustine's works has been studied exhaustively in recent years, and the following chapter should provide merely a glimpse of the richness of the training programme that was meant to help in the process of the conversion of the whole person to a new life.⁸¹

3.1 *The Initial Catechesis and Entrance into the Catechumenate*

In his *De catechizandis rudibus*—written at the request of Deogratias, a deacon of Carthage—Augustine shows what a person interested in Christianity could expect. Before entering the catechumenate, he or she would meet with a catechist whose task was to assess whether the aspirant was able to be instructed in the matters of the faith. To achieve this, he would give to the newcomer at first a short and basic instruction on the faith. Augustine recognised that it was not at all easy to give such a first instruction in the Christian faith. He knew it was difficult to express the teaching of God briefly and in simple terms.⁸² He was aware that the newcomer could find the catechist's lengthy presentation dull or annoying and showed how important it was to observe the listener's reactions and how to keep the discourse short.⁸³ Augustine proposed two examples of such a catechesis that sum up the history of salvation, or the way God deals with humanity in the course of its history from the first books of the Bible to the end of time.⁸⁴

81 For the institution of catechumenate in Augustine's Africa, see esp. Benedict Busch, 'De initiatione christiana secundum sanctum Augustinum', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 52 (1938), 358–483; Emilien Lamirande, 'Catechumenus', in AL 1 (1986–1994), 786–794; Finn, *Early Christian Baptism*, 111–171; Grossi, *Catechesi*, 14–19; Suzanne Poque, 'Introduction', in Augustin d'Hippone, *Sermons pour la Pâque* (SC 116; Paris: Cerf, 2003), 9–153; Ferguson, 776–818; William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (2nd edn.; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2014); Miloš Lichner, *Kontextuálny pohľad na sviatosť krstu v sermones svätého Augustína* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2015), 33–38.

82 Aug. *cat. rud.* 2. 3 (CCL 46: 122).

83 Aug. *cat. rud.* 2. 4–3. 5; 13. 19 (CCL 46: 123–125, 142 f.).

84 Gavriluk, 282 f. For a further analysis of Augustine's approach to the conversion to Chris-

In this encounter, the catechist was supposed to examine the sincerity of the intent of the newcomer to be instructed, whether he sought some worldly profit or salvation for his soul. The motive for many to come—as Augustine attests—was fear, more specifically fear of God. This might sound strange to us, but for the African Christians God was ‘very much an awe-inspiring Judge’.⁸⁵ It was fear of the Last Judgment that moved Marius Victorinus to conversion, and even Augustine’s worry about imminent death and the penalty for his sins was one of the strong factors in his conversion.⁸⁶ Another powerful inducement was dreams, considered in Antiquity as divinely inspired not only by pagans but also by Christians, like the martyr Perpetua or Augustine’s mother Monica.⁸⁷ The third motivating force was miracles, as Augustine’s letter about a certain Dioscorus shows: this official’s decision to become a catechumen and later to persevere were both stimulated by the miraculous healing of his daughter and his own sight.⁸⁸ It is necessary to say that Augustine did not rely on such popular means but rather tried to divert the focus of the newcomers to more trustworthy sources of the knowledge of God: awareness of God’s care for us, biblical prophecies and accounts, and hope for miracles that are invisible.⁸⁹

After the instruction you should ask him whether he believes these things and desires to observe them. And when he answers that he does, you should of course sign him, with due ceremony, and deal with him in accordance with the custom of the Church.⁹⁰

If this newcomer (*rudis*) met the prerequisites, he was accepted into the catechumenate. It seems that children from the age of seven years, as they were considered capable of memorising the creed and answering all the questions, would take full part in the catechumenate.⁹¹ However, in the fourth and fifth

tianity, see Jean-Pierre Belche, ‘Die Bekehrung zum Christentum nach Augustins Büchlein *De catechizandis rudibus*’, *Augustiniana* 27 (1977), 26–69, 333–363; 28 (1978), 255–287; 29 (1979), 247–279. Similarly, *ciu.* 18 was used as a sequence of three consecutive instructions for the catechumens: C. Schäublin, ‘Zwei Bemerkungen über Literature in den neuen Augustin-Briefen’, *MH* 41 (1984), 54–61; Johannes van Oort, ‘Augustine’s letters to Firmus (1A* and 2*) and the Purpose of the *De Civitate Dei*’, in *SP* 27 (1993), 417–423.

85 Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 196; Frend, *Donatist Church*, 97–99.

86 *Aug. conf.* 8. 4. 9–8. 5. 10 (CCL 27: 118–120).

87 *Pass. Perp. Fel.* 10 (ed. Musurillo 116–118); *Aug. conf.* 3. 11. 19 (CCL 27: 37f.).

88 *Aug. ep.* 227 (CSEL 57: 481–483); Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 114–116.

89 *Aug. cat. rud.* 6. 10 (CCL 46: 130f.).

90 *Aug. cat. rud.* 26. 50 (tr. Christopher 82).

91 *Aug. an. et or.* 3. 9. 12 (CSEL 60: 369); Gavrilyuk, 279.

centuries, it was already customary for parents to present their children to a minister of the Church even before they were able to respond or to speak.⁹² Apparently, no examination of a child for his or her ability to receive Christian schooling was necessary. Although child baptism was discussed in this period, it seems that children were baptised at an early age only in a case of emergency and Augustine considered adult baptism to be the normal practice.⁹³

This entry into the catechumenate consisted of several rites: signing the forehead with a cross, the imposition of hands, and the 'sacrament of salt' (*sacramentum salis*).⁹⁴ The signing with the cross thus marked the entrance of the catechumen into the catechumenate and it might have been repeated also on their dismissal after the first part of Church services. Augustine compares it to the sprinkling of blood on doorposts to ward off the destroying angel, and this rite had, therefore, also an apotropaic function.⁹⁵ The custom of giving salt to the catechumens is attested at the end of the fourth century by a canon of the Council of Hippo (393): 'During the solemn Easter season the sacrament is not given to the catechumens, with the exception of the customary salt ...'⁹⁶ Although different interpretations of this rather obscure canon exist,⁹⁷ its text suggests that giving salt was considered a 'sacrament'. However, the reading also opens the possibility that this rite was not celebrated only once at the entrance to the catechumenate, but that it was frequently administered, perhaps as a kind of spiritual inoculation against evil.⁹⁸

92 Michel Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate: The First Six Centuries* (New York: Sadlier, 1979), 92.

93 Suzanne Poque, 'Un souci pastoral d'Augustin. La persévérance des chrétiens baptisés dans leur enfance', BLE 88 (1987), 273–286.

94 Aug. *cat. rud.* 26. 50 (CCL 46: 174); SI 1. 3 (CCL 60: 305); Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 150.

95 Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 118. 5; 50. 2 (CCL 36: 657, 433 f.); Busch, 413–416; Kelly, *Devil*, 111.

96 *Conc. Hipp.* 393, *Breviculum* (PL 56: 421): *Ut etiam per solemnissimos paschales dies sacramentum catechumenis non datur, nisi solitum salis: quia si fideles per illos dies sacramentum non mutant, nec catechumenos oportet mutare.*

97 James E. Latham, *The Symbolism of Salt* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1982), 97 f.

98 The repetition of the rite is rejected by Martin Klöckener, 'Die Bedeutung der neu entdeckten Augustinus-Predigten ("Sermones" Dolbeau) für die liturgiegeschichtliche Forschung', in *Augustin Prédicateur* (395–411). *Actes Du Colloque International de Chantilly* (5–7 Septembre 1996) (Paris: Institut des Études Augustiniennes, 1998), 155 f., for the repeated administration of the sacrament of salt speak can. 3 of the Council of Hippo (393); Vincenzo Monachino, *La cura pastorale a Milano, Cartagine e Roma nel sec. IV* (Romae: apud Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1947), 168; Frederik van der Meer, *Augustine the bishop: the life and work of a father of the church* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 356; Gavriluk, 287; Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 174 n. 157 and 224; Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 81 and probably others.

According to his *De catechizandis rudibus*, this rite came after the first catechetical instruction and after the first confession of the newcomer of believing in what he or she had heard. The rite consisted of signing with the cross on the forehead, the imposition of hands, and giving the 'sacrament of salt':

As to the sacrament of salt which he receives when it has been well explained to him that the symbols of divine things are, it is true, visible, but that invisible things are therein honoured, and that the species (of salt), when sanctified by the words of the blessing, is not to be regarded as it is in every-day use, he should likewise be told what is meant by the form of words which he has heard, and what the seasoning element in it is of which this species of salt is the symbol.⁹⁹

It is interesting that salt is not mentioned directly in the passage, which leads to the question of whether Augustine considered this rite a sacrament that would be subject to the ancient practice called *disciplina arcani*. At least some ancient Churches observed the custom of not speaking or writing explicitly about the Christian sacraments, but rather describing them in a way that would be accessible only to those who accepted it. In his *De peccatorum meritis*, Augustine states:

There is more than one kind of sanctification. There is the sanctification of the catechumens which is accomplished by the sign of Christ, and the prayer for the imposition of hands. Although that which they receive is not the Body of Christ, nevertheless it is a holy thing and more holy than the ordinary food we eat, because it is a sacrament.¹⁰⁰

In his works, Augustine interprets the salt as a condiment that bestows wisdom,¹⁰¹ but also as a symbol of incorruptibility and the ability to draw the corruption out of sinners.¹⁰² Surprising is his positive valuation of Lot's wife turned into the statue of salt 'to warn men not to imitate her example' of looking behind, 'and to season their hearts lest they become insipid.'¹⁰³ This spiritual meaning of the salt has also its parallels in the admonishment that the cate-

99 Aug. *cat. rud.* 26. 50 (CCL 46: 173 f.; tr. Christopher 82).

100 *Pecc. mer.* 2. 26. 42 (CSEL 60: 113; tr. Latham 100). Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 178 argues that can. 3 of Hippo (393) simply prohibited entrance into the catechumenate on Easter day.

101 *En. ps.* 59. 2; 83. 3; 101. 2. 8; *ciu.* 16. 30 (CCL 39: 76, 1148; 40: 1443; 48: 523).

102 *S. dom. m.* 1. 6. 17 (CCL 35: 16).

103 *Qu. eu.* 2. 43 (CCL 44B: 103).

chist should give to the new catechumen: not to perceive realities only in the 'carnal' way, but to search for a 'spiritual meaning'. Augustine obviously tries to transmit to the next generation his own lesson he learned in Milan while listening to Ambrose's spiritual exegesis of the Old Testament passages that created, in their literal sense, so many problems for his faith.¹⁰⁴ If the catechumen hears something of a 'carnal ring' in Scripture, he should look for a figurative meaning and try to understand the Bible in the light of the double commandment of love that is the core of Augustine's biblical exegesis.¹⁰⁵ But this should involve even his everyday practice, as the catechumen should not limit his works of love only to the 'physical' neighbour, but to 'everyone who may be with him in that holy city, whether he be already there or have not yet appeared'.¹⁰⁶

3.2 *The First Part of the Catechumenate: 'The Hearers'*

Having accepted the sign of the cross and having tasted the salt, the newcomers became 'catechumens'. We could have found catechumens not only in the Catholic Church but also with the Donatists,¹⁰⁷ as the institution existed in Africa already long before the schism, in Tertullian's era.¹⁰⁸ This term applied to those who have not yet received baptism, but longed for baptism and longed to become Christian in the full sense of the word.¹⁰⁹ Some of them—such as Augustine—became catechumens as children, while others endeavoured to make this step as adults.¹¹⁰

Already at this first stage of their journey towards baptism, the catechumens were considered members of the Church, members of 'a great household', although in a distant and liminal way.¹¹¹ As the catechumens, signed by the creed, belonged already to Christ, they were also considered as conceived in the womb of the mother Church.¹¹² 'If someone tells you: "I am Christian", you ask him: "A catechumen, or a believer?"'¹¹³ Not only did they have their rights

104 Aug. *conf.* 6. 3. 3–4 (CCL 27: 75f.).

105 Aug. *doctr. chr.* 1. 35. 39; 1. 37. 41 (CCL 32: 28–30); Bertrand de Margerie, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse. III. Saint Augustin* (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 33–57.

106 Aug. *cat. rud.* 26. 50 (CCL 46: 174).

107 Aug. *Cresc.* 2. 5. 7; *un. bapt.* 11. 19 (CSEL 52: 365f.; 53: 20).

108 Christine Mohrmann, *Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des hl. Augustin* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1965), 90.

109 Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 44. 2; *cat. rud.* 14. 21 (CCL 36: 389; 46: 145).

110 Aug. *conf.* 1. 11. 17 (CCL 27: 9).

111 Aug. s. 301A. 8 = Denis 17 (MA 1: 88f.); Pignot, 'Questioning', 452. The status of catechumens in the Church legislation of the fourth and fifth centuries is studied by Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 172–180.

112 Aug. s. 260C. 1 = Mai 94 (MA 1: 333).

113 Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 44. 2 (CCL 36: 389).

in the Church, but also the civil law recognised their situation.¹¹⁴ In Augustine's time, it was sufficient for some of them if their motivations were a public career or other status interests. The Christians—and especially the Christians in Africa—were convinced that only with baptism did there come salvation. When travelling through a foreign city, Augustine came to know a rich family whose son had died unbaptised and could not, therefore, be buried in the Church. In his sermon, Augustine took the opportunity to remind his audience that the destiny of the unbaptised is death and urged catechumens to seek baptism.¹¹⁵ He wanted them to continue the path of their catechumenate. He even warned the catechumens that refusing to go further in their baptismal preparation and to move towards baptism may result in premature abortion or miscarriage.¹¹⁶

Augustine describes quite clearly what the time of the catechumenate was intended for: 'What is all that time for, during which they hold the name and place of catechumens, except to hear what the faith and pattern of Christian life should be?'¹¹⁷ The catechumens were 'hearers of the Word', and were, therefore, also called *audientes*. In fact, the 'hearing' of God's word was the most important part of the preparation for baptism.¹¹⁸ This did not mean that they would be expected to learn only theory, but also to acquire the Christian way of life in practice: they should have 'heard which kind of faith and life a Christian must have'.¹¹⁹ The aim of this phase of the preparation for baptism was to trigger and to achieve a personal transformation described as 'conversion'.¹²⁰ Augustine even maintained correspondence with some catechumens of high rank: this proves that the care for catechumens and the formation of the Christian community was his constant concern.¹²¹ The preparation of new Chris-

114 Lamirande, 'Catechumenus', 789; Id., 'Christianus', in AL 1 (1986–1994b), 843.

115 Aug. s. 142auct = Dolbeau 7 (ed. Dolbeau 332–333); Éric Rebillard, *Christians and their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca—London: Cornell UP, 2012), 65.

116 *En. ps.* 57. 5; *Io. eu. tr.* 12. 2; s. 359. 4 (CCL 39: 713; 36: 120 f.; PL 39: 1593 f.); Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 100.

117 *F. et op.* 6. 9 (CSEL 41: 44; tr. Lombardo 14).

118 Aug. s. 132. 1; 58. 1 (PL 38: 734; CCL 41Aa: 199).

119 *F. et op.* 6. 9 (CSEL 41: 44). Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 155 argues that there was 'a variety of ways of understanding and organising the catechumenate and that Augustine tried to enforce his own views to promote a uniform practice'. Undoubtedly, there was a certain range of views on how the catechumenate worked. Nevertheless, Augustine's teaching advocated an ancient Church tradition of both theoretical and practical instruction of the catechumens.

120 Finn, *From Death to Rebirth*, 137–238.

121 Pignot, 'Questioning', 457.

tians and their initiation was a central pillar of his *ἐπισκοπή*, or his pastoral activity aiming at the spiritual welfare and unity of the Christians entrusted to him.¹²²

Notwithstanding this care for the spiritual progress of the catechumens, they were not at the centre of the bishop's attention. It seems the catechumens did not have special instruction and that they depended on what they heard from ordinary sermons. These made part of the public liturgy and Augustine preached nearly daily, at least four times a week.¹²³ The number of catechumens was probably fairly large and the bishop's homilies, together with the biblical readings, psalms, and prayers that have formed the first part of the Christian worship, was open to everyone.¹²⁴ In the church, the catechumens formed a clearly identifiable body, and yet a catechumen could have often been present without being noticed.¹²⁵ Still, Augustine noted their presence and, in his sermons, we find numerous remarks addressed to the catechumens.¹²⁶ He would admonish them to live accordingly regarding the sign of the cross they had received earlier, and he often targeted their behaviour to illustrate a certain point, or he would encourage them to move forward towards their baptism.¹²⁷

Although they were already considered Christians, some—and essential—elements of Christian doctrine and worship had not yet been revealed to them. The *disciplina arcani* was practised in Augustine's church to a great extent. The wording of the creed, as well as the Our Father and the meaning of baptism and the Eucharist, would be handed over to them only at a later stage of their preparation, as Augustine reminded them: 'The catechumens do not know what the Christians receive.'¹²⁸ They were still being dismissed before the second part of the Eucharistic celebration. Although they were called 'brothers' and 'believers', they still were not 'members of Christ', Christ had not been entrusted to them, and they had not yet received the Holy Spirit.¹²⁹ Augustine understood the practice of *disciplina arcani* as having a pedagogical purpose because it excites a desire for what is hidden from the catechumen.¹³⁰

122 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 169.

123 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 161.

124 Aug. *en. Ps.* 39. 10 (CCL 38: 433).

125 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 184 and 229–234 lists the sermons addressing the catechumens.

126 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 191–193.

127 Ibidem, 158.

128 Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 11. 4; s. 49. 8; 132. 1 (CCL 36: 112; 41: 620; PL 38: 734).

129 Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 11. 1, 3; 12. 3; 44. 2; 96. 3; s. 124. 1 (CCL 36: 109, 111, 121, 389, 570 f.).

130 Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 96. 3 (CCL 36: 570 f.). Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 111 even claims that the *disci-*

But that was not the only reason. After the prayer that followed the bishop's preaching,¹³¹ the catechumens—together with the unbelievers—were dismissed.¹³² It is not clear how this rite looked: perhaps the catechumens received a blessing, maybe they came forward to have Augustine lay his hands on them, and they could even have received the 'sacrament of salt' at this moment.¹³³

Before they would—if ever—decide to be baptised, they could remain as catechumens for a major part of their lives. It seems that the number of those who postponed their baptism until their deathbed was, however, smaller than was claimed previously. According to É. Rebillard, 'nothing, in the preaching of Augustine, invites one to imagine crowds of indifferent Christians who were waiting until the hour of their death to be baptised'.¹³⁴ And yet, as W. Harmless shows, it does not mean that the delay of baptism was not a pastoral problem for Augustine, as he employed various means to move his catechumens forward.¹³⁵ He describes how some of them, who were lax, were not willing to take upon themselves the moral obligations connected with baptism and continued to sin in the prospect of being forgiven by the rites of baptism.¹³⁶ At the opposite end, there were also perfectionists who would delay their baptism from the fear that they would fail and sin after their baptism.¹³⁷ And still there were those who were catechumens but were interested neither in the Christian doctrine, nor in their way of life.¹³⁸ Augustine knew that even among the

plina arcani 'kept the concrete knowledge of rituals and their true significance hidden by preventing catechumens from performing them'. I don't find this argument convincing, as the *disciplina arcani* did not keep secret only the sequence of the rites, but their meaning in the first place.

131 This prayer *Conversi ad Dominum* can be found in Aug. s. 67; 223A. 5 = Denis 2, or s. 362. 31 (PL 38: 437; MA 1: 17; PL 39: 1632).

132 Aug. s. 49. 8; 359B = Dolbeau 2. 6, 20, 23 (CCL 41: 620; ed. Dolbeau 331, 342–344). It seems this practice of dismissing catechumens after the sermons differed from that in other parts of the Roman empire where they were dismissed only after the prayer of the faithful: see William Harmless, 'The Voice and the Word: Augustine's Catechumenate in Light of the Dolbeau Sermons', *AugSt* 35/1 (2004), 28.

133 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 189.

134 Éric Rebillard, 'La figure du catéchumène et le problème du délai du baptême dans la pastorale d'Augustin', in *Augustin prédicateur (395–411): Actes du Colloque international de Chantilly (5–7 septembre 1996)*, ed. G. Madec (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1998), 288 f.

135 Harmless, 'Voice', 24.

136 Aug. s. 142auct = Dolbeau 7. 4; see also s. 97A. 3 = Casin. 2. 114–115 (ed. Dolbeau, 303; MA 1: 417).

137 Aug. s. 97A. 3 = Casin. 2. 114–115; *Io. eu. tr.* 4. 13; *conf.* 1. 11. 18 (MA 1: 417; CCL 36: 37; 27: 10).

138 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 162 hypothesises that Augustine played an important role in the instruction of catechumens in Carthage and that his *f. et op.* might have been situated to

people present at his sermons, who might even have applauded his preaching, were those who came to church and later would fill the circus and the arena with the same enthusiasm¹³⁹ or who would regularly be drunk at the feasts of martyrs.¹⁴⁰ It was not strange to him that Christian love often took the shape of ungenerous disputes on the streets or in the courtroom.¹⁴¹ There were rich people who were so greedy that they would try to snatch property from their poor neighbours, and upper-class men who kept their mistresses and were not happy when the bishop addressed this type of sin in his sermons.¹⁴²

It is doubtful that the situation in other parts of Africa in the first half of the fifth century would be different from what Augustine's work witnesses. The catechumenate did not work for everyone. There were those who took Christianity as a status symbol required by their ambition or career, and those who were abashed by the high baptismal standards and were procrastinating in their catechumenate, while there were others who preferred to go along with the crowd and enjoy what the present life had to offer rather than to decide to change. Nonetheless, there were still plenty of those for whom the 'hearing of the Word' worked and who would eventually move to the next stage of their baptismal preparation.

3.3 *Giving a Name for Baptism*

The catechumens did not know it all: it has been mentioned that the core Christian doctrines and sacraments were kept hidden from them. So, when John 6:55 (*My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*) was once read at the beginning of Lent, Augustine provoked the catechumens in his audience:

And perhaps just now, while the gospel was being read, you said to yourselves, ... 'How can the Lord's flesh be eaten, and the Lord's flesh be drunk? I can't imagine what he means.' Well, who closed the door, to stop you knowing the answer? It's veiled in secrecy; but if you like it will be

Carthage and might even have been written at the request of Aurelius. This view would corroborate my view that Augustine's practice of the catechumenate would not remain without influence upon that of Quodvultdeus' Carthage even in the 430s.

139 Aug. s. 301A. 8 = Denis 17; *en. Ps.* 39. 10; 50. 1 (MA 1: 89; CCL 38: 443, 599 f.).

140 Aug. *ep.* 29 (CSEL 34/1: 114–122).

141 Aug. *en. Ps.* 25. 2. 13–14; 118. 24. 3–4 (CCL 38: 149–151; 40: 1749 f.).

142 Aug. s. 50. 7; 223. 3 (CCL 41: 628; PL 38: 1093). Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 187.

unveiled. Come to the point of professing the faith, and you will have solved the problem. The faithful, you see, already know what the Lord meant by his words.¹⁴³

In this way, he played also on the curiosity of his listeners, who would be more disposed to make the step and ask for baptism. At the same time, though, he challenged their ability to understand the full meaning, accessible only to the baptised Christians:

You, though, are called a catechumen, you're called a hearer, and yet you're deaf; because while indeed the ears on your head are open, and you can hear what was said, you still have the ears of your heart shut tight, and so you don't understand what was said ... Look, it's Easter time, put your name down for baptism. If the festival doesn't get you excited, at least let curiosity lead you on, so that you may learn what is meant by *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him* (John 6:56). In order to learn with me what it meant, knock, and the door will be opened for you (Luke 11:9). And just as I am telling you, 'Knock, and the door will be opened for you,' so I too am knocking; open the door for me, I'm shouting in your ears, but I'm knocking at your breast.¹⁴⁴

Some might have been persuaded to receive baptism by the regular preaching Augustine gave before Lent. Others would make this decision after experiencing a vision, a miraculous healing in the family, or any other event that would bring them to a deeper conversion. In the moment the catechumen—or 'hearer'—decided to 'give his name for the baptism,' he entered the next phase of his baptismal preparation. Augustine distinguished ordinary catechumens from those who were to be baptised (*baptizandi*) and become 'peti-

143 Aug. s. 132. 1 (PL 38: 734; tr. Hill, WSA III/4: 325): *Et forte modo cum Evangelium legeretur, dixistis in cordibus vestris: ... Quomodo manducatur caro Domini, et bibitur sanguis Domini? Putamus quid dicit? Quis contra te clausit, ut hoc nescias? Velatum est: sed si volueris, erit revelatum. Accede ad professionem, et solvisti quaestionem. Quod enim dixit Dominus Iesus, iam fideles noverunt.*

144 Aug. s. 132. 1 (PL 38: 734; tr. Hill, WSA III/4: 325 f.): *Tu autem 'Catechumenus' diceris, diceris 'Audiens', et surdus es. Aures enim corporis patentes habes, quia verba quae dicta sunt audis: sed aures cordis adhuc clausas habes, quia quod dictum est non intellegis ... Ecce Pascha est, da nomen ad baptismum. Si non te excitat festivitas, ducat ipsa curiositas: ut scias quid dictum sit: 'Qui manducat carnem meam, et bibit sanguinem meum, in me manet, et ego in illo.' Ut scias mecum quid dictum sit, pulsa, et aperietur tibi. Et ut tibi dico: Pulsa, et aperietur tibi: ita et ego pulso, aperi mihi. Auribus personans, ad pectus pulso.*

tioners' (*baptizandi*), as they had formally asked the bishop to receive the baptism.¹⁴⁵ Augustine explains to them the many meanings he found in this term:

Certainly your very name—since you were called *competentes*—shows that you crave this, that you are striving for this with all the energy of your living. What else are *competentes* but people petitioning for something together? For just as *condocentes*, *concurrences*, and *considentes* mean nothing other than 'people teaching together,' 'people running together,' and 'people pitching camp together,' so the term *competentes* was welded together for no other reason than to describe people who were petitioning for one and the same thing at the same time.¹⁴⁶

Augustine underlined the joint effort of the candidates for baptism to make the undertaking through shared teaching, running, and striving in this period. They had a common goal and the bishop tried to make them a sort of community before they joined the great community of the Church. To facilitate this, the *competentes* made a unique spiritual retreat that consisted of catechesis, thorough penitential discipline, and liturgical rites, such as scrutinies and exorcisms that were meant to ensure that the whole person of the *competens* was reformed and renewed. In fact, the full attention of the person desiring baptism was necessary. They would need to put aside their business and other worldly preoccupations in order to receive the theoretical and practical teaching. If they lived in the countryside, they would need to come to the bishop's city and stay there for the whole forty-day period and take part in this intensive preparation.¹⁴⁷ When explaining the meaning of this Lenten time, Augustine uses imagery taken from ancient medicine: the forty days of the second stage of the catechumenate is similar to the forty days during in which the human

145 Augustine calls them *baptizandi* in *f. et op.* 7. 11; 8. 13; 13. 17; 15. 19, and 20. 36, *competentes* in *f. et op.* 6. 9; 18. 33, and 19. 35; he makes the distinction between catechumens and the *competentes* in s. 216. 1; 228. 1; 229. 1; 392. 1: see Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 294 f. In Rome, the *competentes* were called the 'elect' (*electi*), in the East φωτισόμενοι, those who were to be 'illuminated' by baptism: Grossi, *Catechesi*, 16.

146 Aug. s. 216. 1 (PL 38: 1077; tr. Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 314 f.): *Hoc nempe vos concupiscere, ad hoc ambire omnibus mentis vestrae conatibus, ipsum vestrum nomen, quod competentes vocamini, ostendit. Quid enim aliud sunt competentes, quam 'simul petentes'? Nam quomodo condocentes, concurrentes, considentes, nihil aliud sonat, quam simul docentes, simul currentes, simul sedentes; ita etiam Competentium vocabulum non aliunde quam de simul petendo atque unum aliquid appetendo compositum est.*

147 Aug. *cura mort.* 12. 15 (CSEL 41: 646); Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 291 f.

being takes shape in the womb of his or her mother.¹⁴⁸ After the catechumens were conceived in the womb of the 'mother Church', the time of the mother's pains of labour then came. Nonetheless, Augustine knew that baptism would only be a beginning when some pains of labour end but others continue: true birth would come only at the end of time.¹⁴⁹

At the beginning of this Lenten period, there seems to have been some examination of the candidates' lifestyle. Its purpose was to exclude anyone unworthy to receive baptism. The prostitutes, actors, and public sinners, but also drunkards, the avaricious, and slanderers would not be allowed to continue unless they broke with their way of life. They would have to have legitimate wives, they could not have mistresses or be divorced and remarried. The examiner had to make sure that the candidates were resolved to abandon their sin and not to sin anymore after their baptism.¹⁵⁰ In this way, the examination was not meant to create obstacles for those willing to be baptised, but rather to make sure that their moral effort would not contradict their declared resolution but would rather resonate in harmony with the baptism.¹⁵¹

The *competentes* frequented daily catecheses that addressed them; this catechesis made up a section of the first part of the liturgy, as always (*missa catechumenorum*). It is possible that, during Lent, they also attended regular special catechesis.¹⁵² In this catechesis, Augustine emphasised the importance of moral instruction and he tried to weave together the teaching on morals with the teaching on Christian doctrine.¹⁵³ He warned them against serious sins, such as adultery or concubinage, and showed how these sins affect and scandalise others. But he also did not neglect the 'small enemies' or the sins one commits daily.¹⁵⁴

It was not enough just to receive instruction. The 'training programme' required also strict ascetic discipline. Candidates for baptism were expected to fast: Christians in Augustine's time fasted until the ninth hour, that is, until around 3 o'clock in the afternoon.¹⁵⁵ Their table was to be bland and simple and

148 Aug. s. 205. 1 (PL 38: 1039).

149 Aug. s. 210. 7 (PL 38: 1054).

150 Aug. *f. et op.* 1. 1 f.; 6. 8; 18. 33 (CSEL 41: 35–37, 43, 78).

151 Aug. *f. et op.* 26. 48 (CSEL 41: 93).

152 Poque, 'Introduction', 25.

153 Aug. *f. et op.* 7. 11; 13. 19 (CSEL 41: 48, 59); Harmless, *Augustine and the catechuminate*², 296 f.

154 Aug. s. 352. 2, 6 f. (PL 38: 1550 f., 1555–1558).

155 Aug. *ep.* 54. 9 (CCL 31: 192), but this type of fast was common also in Ambrose's Milan: Josef Schmitz, *Gottesdienst im altchristlichen Mailand: eine liturgiewissenschaftliche Unter-*

they abstained not only from meat, but also from alcoholic beverages. They were ordered to abstain from sexual intercourse,¹⁵⁶ and also from the public baths where they would mingle with the usual social crowd, which could weaken their resolution to change their lives.¹⁵⁷ Needless to say, the lack of hygiene would not bring only personal discomfort to the *competentes* but would also make him unpresentable at various public and social events. Apart from the fast, Augustine enjoined his *competentes* to pray—occasionally, even for the whole night—and to distribute alms to the poor.¹⁵⁸ These three ways were an expression of the penitent attitude of those who despised their previous way of life and strived to bring their bodies back to a proper relation with their interiority.¹⁵⁹

The third element in the baptismal training was formed by liturgical rites: by scrutinies and exorcisms.

3.4 *Scrutinies and Exorcisms*

The time of the Lent was marked, for the *competentes*, by various scrutinies and exorcisms. In Hippo, this *scrutinium* took place probably not long after the beginning of Lent.¹⁶⁰ It is even possible that there were more scrutinies and exorcisms during these weeks of preparation for baptism.¹⁶¹

During the scrutiny, the *competentes* stood on a goatskin (*cilicium*) and their bodies were examined. This standing on the goatskin is also attested in other geographical areas, such as Antioch and Edessa, but we find no mention of it in the initiation rites in the Western area (Rome, Milan, Gaul), or in Constantinople.¹⁶² For Augustine, the goatskin was a symbol of repentance, a renunciation of the candidates' sinful inheritance, but also of their hope that at the Last Judgment, they would be numbered not among the goats but the sheep.¹⁶³ The body

suchung über Initiation und Messfeier während des Jahres zur Zeit des Bischofs Ambrosius (obit. 397) (Köln: P. Hanstein, 1975), 240–246.

156 Aug. s. 205. 2; 208. 1 (PL 38: 1040, 1044f.) presupposes this type of abstinence also for the already baptised faithful.

157 Aug. *f. et op.* 6. 8 (CSEL 41: 48); Jensen, *Living Water*, 160.

158 Aug. s. 229A = Guelf. 7. 2; 56. 11. 15; 58. 9. 10; 205. 3; 206.2; 210. 10; 213 = Guelf. 1. 11 (MA 1: 449; 41Aa: 207, 211; PL 38: 1040–1042, 1052; MA 1: 449).

159 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 304.

160 Th.-André Audet, 'Note sur les catéchèses baptismales de Saint Augustin', in *Augustinus Magister. Congrès international augustinien. Paris, 21–24 septembre 1954* (Paris: Études augustinienes, 1954), i. 158.

161 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 310 n. 16.

162 Johannes Quasten, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Exorcism of the Cilicium', *HTHR* 35/3 (1942), 209–219; Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 311.

163 Aug. *ciu.* 15. 20; see *cons. eu.* 2. 4. 13; s. 216. 10 (CCL 48: 482; CSEL 43: 94; PL 38: 1082).

examination might have had as a possible motive the discovering of whether the *competens* suffered from leprosy or other contagious diseases, or whether he bore some physical marks of demonic possession.¹⁶⁴

Nearly everyone in the ancient Mediterranean, pagans, Jews, and Christians, held the same cosmology: under the sphere of 'harmonious stars', there were 'the lower depths of the universe', which were ruled by various demonic forces that communicated with the material world. For Christians, the world was dominated especially by 'the Lord of the World', Satan and his angels. These demons were responsible for anything that plagued human existence, starting from diseases, natural disasters and social misfortunes.¹⁶⁵ Christians attributed these adversities together with various vices, such as drunkenness, addiction to the pagan games, and idolatry, to the power of Satan and his demons. In Augustine's words, the human race is 'a plaything of demons', 'the devil's fruit-tree, his own property, from which he may pick his fruit'.¹⁶⁶ This strained demonology was not anything surprising nor new for African Christianity. Earlier, some of Tertullian's work could be read as a commentary to Christian living according to baptismal renunciation.¹⁶⁷ The catechumens and the baptised were warned that they live in a world ruled by demons: no place, no street, no market, no baths, taverns, or houses are free of the idols.¹⁶⁸ It would be even more difficult for the Christians of Carthage to avoid the temptation to attend chariot races in the circus, gladiatorial games and animal hunts in the amphitheatre, athletic competitions in the stadium, or plays in the theatre.¹⁶⁹ Refusing to join in these 'pomp of the devil', the Christian rejected being part of a substantial and very popular part of the life of their city.¹⁷⁰ Since the earliest times of Christianity in Africa, to renounce these idols and the devil meant to reject many professions that could have been connected to idolatry. Craftsmen and building constructors were not permitted to take part in the fabrication of idols and temples. Christians could not have become magistrates because they also had

164 D.B. Capelle, 'L'introduction du catéchuménat à Rome', RTAM 5 (1953), 148.

165 Aug. s. 18. 1; *agon.* 1. 1–2 (CCL 41: 245f.; CSEL 41: 101–104); E.R. Dodds, *Pagans and Christians in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: CUP, 1965), 38; Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 1978), 1–16; Id., *Augustine of Hippo*, 240.

166 Aug. *nupt. et concup.* 1. 23. 26; c. *Iul. imp.* 6. 21 (CSEL 42: 238; 85.2: 363); Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 398.

167 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 46.

168 Tert. *spect.* 8. 9 (CCL 1: 235; tr. Arbesmann 69).

169 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 46.

170 Tert. *spect.* 4. 1 (CCL 1: 231; tr. Arbesmann 56).

a religious function and would be required to bring sacrifices to pagan gods.¹⁷¹ For Christian merchants, it was even difficult to make business contracts, as trade involved an oath to the gods that they as Christians could not have easily made. Tertullian witnesses that many Christians complained: 'I have nothing else to live by.'¹⁷²

Therefore, the view of a world full of demons necessarily affected also the Christian notion of conversion. No one was free of the abovementioned spiritual influences in his decision for Christ. What is more, it was not considered only an inner psychological move, but a transposition from one cosmic realm, that of Satan, to another, that of Christ and the Church. Therefore, the scrutinies were meant to see if the *competens* still showed signs of submission to the demonic reign, and the exorcism aimed at purging the demon out of the life of the candidate. For the ancient population, the bodily and the spiritual realities were not separate, and this exorcism took a very physical shape.

The exorcist would come forward to invoke the name of Christ at the *competens* and to heap curses at the devil, believed to be present in the 'heart' of the candidate. Alongside the imprecation against Satan to 'get out' of the person,¹⁷³ the bishop would hiss at the candidate. This gesture of hissing at the candidate (*exsufflatio*) sounds strange to our taste, but the people of the times understood it as a sign of contempt: Christians used to hiss at pagan statues, which they believed they were inhabited by demons and used this gesture also in exorcisms.¹⁷⁴ Augustine explains to his *competentes*: 'As you saw today, even little children are hissed at and exorcised, so that the hostile power of the devil, who led one man astray to gain possession of humankind, can be knocked out of them. So it is not these babies—God's creation—whom we hiss at and exorcise, but the one under whose sway come all those born with sin.'¹⁷⁵ For Augustine, the custom to exorcise even small children was moreover also a proof of a traditional belief in original sin.¹⁷⁶ The candidate renounced the devil, his pomps,

171 Tert. *cor.* 13. 7; *idol.* 3–17 (CCL 2: 1062, 1102–1118); Patout Burns—Jensen, *Christianity*, 59.

172 Tert. *idol.* 5. 1 (CCL 2: 1104).

173 Aug. *agon.* 1. 1; s. 145. 5 (CSEL 41: 101; PL 38: 794).

174 Aug. *c. Iul. imp.* 3. 199; *Ath. v. Ant.* 40 (CSEL 85/1: 498; SC 400: 243–245); Poque, 'Introduction', 27 f.

175 Aug. s. 398. 2 = *ymb. cat.* (CCL 46: 186; tr. Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 313): *Ideo sicut vidistis hodie, sicut nostis, et parvuli exsufflantur et exorcizantur, ut pellatur ab eis diaboli potestas inimica, quae decepit hominem, ut possideret homines. Non ergo creatura Dei in infantibus exorcizatur aut exsufflatur, sed ille sub quo sunt omnes qui cum peccato nascuntur; est enim princeps peccatorum.*

176 Kelly, *Devil*, 112.

and his angels: *Renuntio diabolo, pompis, et angelis eius*.¹⁷⁷ In this way, the exorcised person became free of their former master's slave-yoke to make the act of conversion: to renounce Satan and receive the faith in Christ expressed in the creed.¹⁷⁸ The Lenten discipline, the scrutinies, and the exorcisms left the old self utterly destroyed: the following rites connected to baptism were designed to construct a new self, to forge a new interiority.¹⁷⁹ The renunciation of the devil (*auersio*) was inseparably connected to the proclamation of faith in Christ (*conuersio*).¹⁸⁰

3.5 *Handing over the Creed*

On the Saturday night two weeks before Easter, the *competentes* assembled in the *Basilica pacis* at Hippo Regius for a vigil devoted to prayer, psalmody, biblical reading, and preaching.¹⁸¹ Its highlight was the handing over of the creed that comprised the Christian faith, the so-called 'rule of faith' (*regula fidei*) to the candidates for baptism.¹⁸² The *competentes* were supposed to hear it for the first time and to learn it by heart.¹⁸³ The bishop explained the meaning of the single lines of the baptismal 'symbol' that was the 'pact of faith' or 'pact of fidelity' (*pactum fidei*) that the *baptizandi* made.¹⁸⁴ The creed—the Symbol—represented a guarantee of their loyalty to the terms of the 'spiritual commercial transaction' that they were going to do with their baptism, something by which Christians can recognise each other.¹⁸⁵ For them, it was the first step into the world of heavenly realities, so far hidden to them by the Church practice of the *disciplina arcani*. Surely, they already knew what Christians believed in, as they participated in the first part of the liturgy. However, they now received a succinct expression of their faith, together with a commentary that might rectify some of their erroneous conceptions of Christian beliefs.¹⁸⁶ Now, the creed should help them to keep their baptism until the end of their days.¹⁸⁷

177 Aug. s. 215. 1 (RB 68 [1958]: 18). Augustine does not comment anywhere on the meaning of the 'pomps': Poque, 'Introduction', 29.

178 Aug. s. 215. 1; 216. 7, 10 (RB 68 [1958]: 18; PL 38: 1081–1082).

179 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 322.

180 Aug. s. 368. 3; *en. Ps.* 9. 10; *duab. an.* 10 (RB 79 [1969]: 128; CCL 38: 65; CSEL 25/1: 65); Poque, 'Introduction', 30 f.

181 Finn, *Early Christian Baptism*, 155.

182 Aug. s. 398 = *ymb. cat.* 1. 1 (CCL 46: 185), see s. 213. 2 (MA 1: 442 f.).

183 Aug. s. 212. 2; 213 = *Guelf.* 1. 11 (SC 116: 182; MA 1: 449).

184 Aug. s. 212. 1 (SC 116: 174).

185 Aug. s. 212. 2; 213. 2, 4 (SC 116: 184; MA 1: 442–445).

186 Aug. s. 214. 1 (RB 72 [1962]: 14).

187 Aug. s. 398. 7. 15 (CCL 46: 198).

During the following week, the *competentes* were expected to learn it, with the help of their godparents. One week later, they assembled again for the rite of the *redditio symboli*, the handing back of the creed.¹⁸⁸ The location of this ceremony was probably the wing of the *basilica pacis* at Hippo which also contained the baptismal complex.¹⁸⁹ Augustine examined every one of the *competentes* if they were able to recite the creed word by word on their own. This test served as a rehearsal for the solemn profession of faith on the Easter Vigil, as part of the baptismal rites, when the creed was given back again.¹⁹⁰ The *competentes* did not always do well: on one such occasion, Augustine told them not to panic, as they had another week to learn it better.¹⁹¹

The rite of the *redditio symboli* created for Augustine an occasion to give another sermon on the creed and to help the candidates interiorise the content and the meaning of the creed.¹⁹² This creed was not that of Nicaea, but every local church had its tradition of its baptismal creed which differed from city to city.¹⁹³ The extant sermons seem to show that Augustine sometimes used the creed he accepted in Milan at his baptism, however, on another occasion, he used the creed of Hippo Regius.¹⁹⁴

The memorising of the creed had a multiple motivation. First of all, again, was the secrecy required by the *disciplina arcani*, which did not permit writing down the creed. The book where the baptised were expected to find the reading of the creed was their own memory.¹⁹⁵ Learning it 'by heart' facilitated the internalisation of the truth that was supposed to descend from the mind of the believer to his 'heart'.¹⁹⁶ In fact, it is Augustine's theory of the relationship between the faith and understanding, expressed by the famous dictum *crede ut intelligas*¹⁹⁷ that he applies to the transmission of the faith: 'Let this faith impress itself on your hearts and guide your confession. On hearing this, believe so that you may understand; so that by making progress you may be able

188 Aug. s. 213. 11 (MA 1: 449).

189 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 324.

190 Aug. s. 213. 1; 58. 2 (MA 1: 441; CCL 41Aa: 200); Ferguson, 789.

191 Aug. s. 58. 1 (CCL 41Aa: 199).

192 Aug. s. 215 (RB 68 [1958]: 18–25).

193 On the development of the creed in the West, see Liuew H. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed: Origin, History, and Some Early Commentaries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).

194 The question is discussed by J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London: Longmans, 1960), 172–181; J.T. Lienhard, 'Creed, *Symbolum*', in ATAE, 254f.; Westra, *Creed*, 163, and Poque, 'Introduction', 62f.

195 Aug. s. 213. 1 (MA 1: 441).

196 Aug. s. 212. 2; 398. 1. 1 (SC 116: 182; CCL 46: 185).

197 Aug. *eu. lo. tr.* 29. 6 (CCL 36: 296f.).

to understand what you believe.¹⁹⁸ For Augustine, later in his life, there existed a reciprocity between faith and reason, as he was not a fideist: faith opens up a horizon of understanding, which—in its part—gives deeper insight and credibility to the faith.

As a token or guarantee of the baptised person's loyalty to the spiritual trade they have made, the Symbol was also an expression of orthodoxy, of the right faith. In his commentary on the creed on the occasion of the *traditio* and *redditio symboli*, Augustine tried to communicate the principal doctrines of Nicaean orthodoxy.¹⁹⁹ He does this not only by an affirmative explanation of the doctrine but also by demarcating the borders of orthodoxy against heterodox beliefs and even other religious groups. In this way, the creed and its explanation also become a guard against false interpretations of Christian doctrine. Knowing very well the myths of the Manichaeans, he affirms the goodness of God, who created the world and man as good, and not evil.²⁰⁰ When teaching on the unity, equality, and consubstantiality of the Father and the Son, Augustine, therefore, turns against the Arians—or Homoians—who considered the Son smaller than the Father and spoke of them as of different realities, and he attacks them: 'This is what blasphemous Arian heretics say, not me!'²⁰¹ Similarly, Augustine dedicates much space to the explanation of the double generation of the Son, denied again by the Arians, who taught that there was a time when the Son was not.²⁰² When speaking about the Christian belief in the Resurrection of Christ, he affirms that this doctrine distinguishes Christians from all other groups and that neither pagans nor Jews would agree to such a statement.²⁰³ There are passages that reaffirm the indelible character imparted by baptism against the Donatist practice to rebaptise Catholics.²⁰⁴ Again, against their view that the only true Church is their Church residing in Africa, Augustine teaches on the catholicity of the Church which includes churches of all regions and cities.²⁰⁵ And, finally, Augustine shows an image of the Church which is fought against by various heresies, but cannot be overcome

198 Aug. s. 214. 10 (RB 72 [1962]: 20; tr. Harmless, WSA 3/8: 156): *Haec fides imbuat corda uestra, et confessionem dirigat. Hoc audiendo credite, ut intellegatis; ut quod creditis, intellegere roficiendo ualeatis.*

199 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 333.

200 Aug. s. 214. 3 (RB 72 [1962]: 15f.).

201 Aug. s. 398. 2. 5 (CCL 46: 189; tr. Harmless, WSA 3/10: 448): *Hoc Ariani haeretici blasphemi dicunt, not ego.*

202 Aug. s. 398. 3. 8 (CCL 46: 190f.).

203 Aug. s. 215. 6 (RB 68 [1958]: 24).

204 Aug. s. 398. 8. 16 (CCL 46: 198f.).

205 Aug. s. 213. 8 (MA 1: 447).

by them.²⁰⁶ The topic of heresies and other religions and their doctrines incompatible with the baptismal faith is decidedly present in Augustine's instruction on the creed, but the positive presentation of the Catholic doctrine is much stronger than this negative delimitation of the faith. We are going to observe a very similar approach to these groups and doctrines also in *Quodvultdeus'* sermons.²⁰⁷

3.6 *Handing over the Lord's Prayer*

After the summary of the faith contained in the creed had been handed down, Augustine gave to the *competentes* also the Our Father prayer.²⁰⁸ The African tradition places much greater emphasis on the *traditio orationis* than other African traditions and it seems that it can be an ancient element of the preparation of baptism, as Tertullian's and Cyprian's treatises on the Lord's Prayer might suggest.²⁰⁹

This happened on Sunday, a week before Easter, shortly after the *traditio symboli*: it is not clear whether this was a free-standing rite or part of a regular liturgy.²¹⁰ At the beginning of all four extant sermons on the *traditio orationis*, Augustine explains this sequence of instruction on faith and prayer in reference to the process of faith explained by Paul in Romans 10:9–17, and especially Romans 10:13–14: *All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then are they to call on him if they have not come to believe in him?* The knowledge of God contained in the creed is necessary to know whom to invoke in the prayer, and therefore first came the exposition of the symbol, then the instruction on prayer.²¹¹ The Lord's Prayer was handed down to the *baptizandi* in a similar way to that of the creed. The bishop recited the text of the Our Father to his audience and wanted them to repeat it so that they might also learn it.²¹² The text of this prayer was, again, one of the topics guarded by the *disciplina arcani*.²¹³

Augustine always took a line of the prayer, as he did with the creed or even with biblical texts, and commented on the petition. In this way, he transmitted

²⁰⁶ Aug. s. 398. 6. 14 (CCL 46: 197).

²⁰⁷ See Chapter Eight below.

²⁰⁸ Augustine follows an ancient Church tradition of instruction on the Our Father: Jean-Paul Bouhot, 'La tradition catéchétique et exégétique du *Pater noster*', *RechAug* 33 (2003), 3–18.

²⁰⁹ Vittorino Grossi, 'Il contesto battesimale dell'*oratio dominica* nei commenti di Tertulliano, Cipriano, Agostino', *Aug* 20/1–2 (1980), 214.

²¹⁰ Aug. s. 58. 1. 1 (CCL 41Aa: 199); Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*¹, 337.

²¹¹ Aug. s. 56. 1. 1; 57. 1; 58. 1. 1; 59auct = Poque 1. 1 (CCL 41Aa: 153, 178, 199, 221).

²¹² Aug. s. 56. 4. 5; 57. 2 (CCL 41Aa: 156, 179).

²¹³ Ambrose explained the meaning of the Our Father in his *sacr.* 5. 4. 20–29 (CSEL 73: 67–72) only after baptism.

not only the text of the Lord's Prayer but also his teaching on its content and the right Christian attitude for prayer. He makes sure that the *baptizandi* understand both whom they can and cannot invoke in their prayer and what is and is not allowed to be asked for. It is only the Father of Jesus Christ to whom they can direct their prayer: 'From the devil, from idols, from demons you mustn't ask for anything that is properly asked for.'²¹⁴ It is not only the object of prayer that distinguishes a Christian prayer from a pagan one but also its content: 'If you demand the death of your enemies from God the Father who is in heaven, what good does it do you? ... So if you stand up and start praying for harm to befall your enemies, your prayer will become a sin.'²¹⁵ Augustine supposes that the *baptizandi* might bring to their new faith the common religious background of the (not only) ancient Mediterranean where there was a repeated use of magic in their everyday life. The idea of using prayer to wish something bad upon other people might not have been alien even to the Christians in Africa.²¹⁶

However, Augustine did not stop there. The place where the prayer happens is the heart of the Christian believer.²¹⁷ The Lord's Prayer is, for Augustine, an armour that he gives to the believers who will be baptised so that they might continue in their spiritual struggle against the evil and the demonic forces that represent it. He speaks of it as of a weapon they are to use daily:²¹⁸ once they are set free by the scrutinies and exorcisms, they should use it, together with the creed, as a means to persevere in the faith until the very end when they will be saved.²¹⁹ In fact, the Lord's Prayer is connected to baptism because of the petition for the forgiveness of sins: and reciting the Our Father would become for the baptised 'as if a daily baptism'.²²⁰

214 Aug. s. 56. 2. 2 (CCL 41Aa: 154; tr. Hill, WSA III/3: 96): *A diabolo, ab idolis, a daemonibus non est petendum aliquid quod debet peti.*

215 Aug. s. 56. 2. 2 (CCL 41Aa: 154; tr. Hill, WSA III/3: 96): *Item a Deo Patre qui est in caelis si optas mortem inimicorum tuorum, quid tibi prodest? ... Si ergo surgis et oras mala inimicis tuis, oratio tua fiet in peccatum.*

216 This practice afflicted even Christians, as a curse of a Christian invoking Christ and a nymph to do something against his enemies, discovered in 1999 at the fountain of Anna Perenna in Parioli, Rome, Italy, might indicate: Marina Piranomonte, 'Religion and Magic at Rome: the Fountain of Anna Perenna', in *Magical Practice in the Latin West*, ed. M. Simón and R.L. Gordon (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 191–214.

217 Aug. s. 56. 3. 4 (CCL 41Aa: 156).

218 Aug. s. 58. 10. 12 (CCL 41Aa: 212).

219 Aug. s. 57. 12–13 (CCL 41Aa: 189–191).

220 Aug. s. 213. 9 (MA 1: 448); Ekkart Sauser, 'Baptismus-baptismus cottidianus—und Sündenvergebung in der Theologie des hl. Augustinus', in *Zeichen des Glaubens. Studien zu Taufe und Firmung. Balthasar Fischer zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. H. Auf der Maur and B. Kleinheyer (Einsiedeln—Freiburg: Benzinger—Herder, 1972), 83–94.

Augustine's remarks on a public *redditio orationis* are rather confusing: he mentions a few times that the *competentes* are to 'give back' the Lord's prayer in eight days' time, that is, on the day of their baptism.²²¹ In his s. 59auct, though, he warns them: 'So because you are going to say this (*scil.* prayer) everyday even after baptism, and much more so after baptism—in fact, you won't be praying this prayer except after baptism, because in a weeks' time you are going to be giving it back, not praying it; after baptism you will pray it, but how can someone who isn't born yet say *Our Father*?'²²² The text suggests that the *baptizandi* would be required to show they have learned this prayer even before the baptismal rites, when they would still be unable to pray it, but only to recite it. Nothing else is known about such a rite but it can be suggested that the bishop rehearsed the prayer with the *competentes*, so that they would be able to recite it during the Easter Vigil and also join in prayer with other Christian faithful during the *missa fidelium*, the part of the Eucharistic service they had not been allowed to attend so far.²²³

3.7 The Baptismal Rites

The usual date set for baptism—in Africa called *baptismus*, *lauacrum*, or *intinction*—would be the Easter Vigil.²²⁴ On Holy Thursday, two days before the baptism, the *competentes* would break their fast and were also allowed to go to the baths. The reason for this was hygiene, as it would bring 'offence to the senses' if they were not to wash their bodies before the baptism.²²⁵ The day after, on Friday, they commemorated, together with all the faithful, the Passion of Christ, who died for the sins of all humanity.²²⁶ On Holy Saturday the *baptizandi* would join the faithful in their fast and would take neither food nor drink for the entire day.²²⁷

The final catechesis before the baptism was addressed to the *competentes*,²²⁸ where Augustine explained, unlike Cyril of Jerusalem or Ambrose, the meaning of baptism before it took place. It was probably during this catechesis, that the *baptizandi*, including children from the age of seven years, stood on a raised platform and proclaimed, in front of the faithful, their faith contained in the

221 Aug. s. 58. 1. 1; 58. 11. 13; 59auct. 1. 1 (CCL 41Aa: 199, 212 f., 221).

222 Aug. s. 59auct. 4. 7 (CCL 41Aa: 224 f.; tr. Hill 128).

223 Aug. s. 58. 1. 1 (CCL 41Aa: 199).

224 Grossi, 'Baptismus', 585 f.

225 Aug. *ep.* 54. 10 (CCL 31: 233).

226 Aug. s. 218. 1 (*Aug* 34 [1994]: 364).

227 Aug. s. 210. 1 (PL 38: 1047).

228 Aug. s. 229A. 1 (MA 1: 463).

creed.²²⁹ After the *baptizandi* proclaimed their faith in front of the assembly, they formed a procession, together with the assisting clergy and singing Psalm 41 (*As a deer yearns for running streams*), to enter the baptistery.²³⁰

The baptistery complex was attached to the west side of the basilica. It consisted of three rooms: an anteroom (called by E. Marec, the director of the excavations at Hippo, the *catechumeneum*), a chapel (Marec terms it the *consignatorium*), and the baptistery itself. The baptistery room was irregular in shape: it was square on two sides and semicircular on the other, its dimensions being 4.8 by 4 metres.²³¹ The font, positioned in the baptistery, had a modified cruciform shape, with three interior steps on eastern and on western sides. It was covered by a marble ciborium supported by four columns. Its outside dimensions were about 2 by 2 metres, and the pool was about 1 metre deep. Between the pillars there were, probably, curtains that provided some privacy for the baptism.²³²

At some moment—either when assembled in the antechamber, or when each of them later entered the font²³³—the candidates facing west renounced ‘the devil, his pomps, and his angels’ and, turning to the east, proclaimed their bonding to Christ.²³⁴ This renunciation and proclamation happened most probably in the form of a triple interrogation with the appropriate answers of the *baptizandus*.²³⁵ Augustine deemed this profession of faith indispensable for the baptism even in the cases of emergency baptisms of those who were on their sickbed and of infants as well.²³⁶

The water in the baptismal font was consecrated by the sign of the cross and by the invocation of the name of Christ.²³⁷ Those who were to be bap-

229 Aug. s. 215. 1; *an. et or.* 1. 10. 12; 3. 9. 12 (RB 68 [1958]: 18; CSEL 60: 312, 369); R. De Latte, ‘Saint Augustin et le baptême’, *Questions liturgiques* 56/4 (1975), 205; Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 358.

230 Aug. *en. Ps.* 41. 1 (CCL 38: 360).

231 Erwan Marec, *Monuments chrétiens d'Hippone ville épiscopale de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1958), 106; Sebastian Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (Münster i. W.: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1998), 115; Ferguson, 785.

232 Robin M. Jensen, ‘Ancient Baptismal Spaces: Form and Function’, *Studia Liturgica* 42 (2012), 118f. Marec, 108; Ristow, 115f.; Ferguson, 785. African baptisteries show a variety of designs and shapes, they can be also octagonal, lip-shaped, cruciform, etc.: Robin M. Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity. Ritual, Visual, and Theological Dimension* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2012), 210–221.

233 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 361f.

234 Aug. s. 215. 1; 216. 6; *en. Ps.* 102. 15 (RB 68 [1958]: 18; PL 38: 1080; CCL 40: 1466).

235 Aug. *f. et op.* 9. 14 (CSEL 41: 51).

236 Aug. s. 115. 4 (PL 38: 657); De Latte, 209, 211; William Harmless, ‘Christ the Pediatrician: Infant Baptism and Christological Imagery in the Pelagian Controversy’, *AugSt* 28/2 (1997), 25.

237 *Io. eu. tr.* 118. 5; *bapt.* 3. 10. 15; 5. 20. 28; s. 352. 3 (CCL 36: 657; CSEL 51: 239, 286; PL 39: 1551f.);

tised stripped and entered this font; Augustine interprets this as a sign of humility.²³⁸ Although nudity did not necessarily provoke embarrassment for ancient people, who were quite used to it in public baths and public games,²³⁹ men and women were baptised separately in Augustine's church.²⁴⁰ It is not clear whether there was a prebaptismal anointing as in other liturgical traditions.²⁴¹ The bishop pronounced the formula of the baptism, which was made in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.²⁴² The baptised person was submerged into the water or had poured water over his or her head and body by the deacon: these three immersions corresponded to a triple interrogation and triple proclamation of faith in the three divine Persons.²⁴³

Surprisingly, most probably at this stage, as soon as they emerged from the font, the neophytes, now baptised and still naked and dripping from the water of the font, raised their hands in the *orans* position and prayed the Lord's Prayer.²⁴⁴ The fact that the African tradition linked the *traditio/redditio symboli* with the *traditio/redditio orationis* corroborates this practice, unknown to Jerusalem or Milan, where it would be required of the candidates to memorise both the creed and the Lord's prayer to be used in direct connection with their

for the ancient history of this rite: Hans Kirsten, *Die Taufabsage. Eine Untersuchung zur Gestalt und Geschichte der Taufe nach den altkirchlichen Taufliturgien* (Berlin: Evangelische Veranstaltung, 1960), 127.

238 Aug. s. 125. 6; 258. 2 (PL 38: 693; SC 116: 348).

239 Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 315; Laurie Guy, 'Naked' Baptism in the Early Church: The Rhetoric and the Reality, JRH 27, 2 (2003), 133–142; Jensen, *Living Water*, 158–168.

240 Aug. *ciu.* 22. 8 (CCL 48: 819); Jensen, *Living Water*, 164f.

241 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 363 reports Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 33. 3 (CCL 36: 307) as a text that could refer to such a practice.

242 Aug. *ep.* 23. 4 (CSEL 34/1: 67).

243 Aug. s. 294. 11. 12; *bapt.* 6. 25. 47 (PL 38: 1342; CSEL 51: 323f.); Poque, 'Introduction', 35; Jensen, 'Ancient Baptismal Spaces', 120 notices that there was not much space in the font that would allow much movement.

244 Aug. *ep.* 5*. 1 (CSEL 88: 29); William Harmless, 'Receive today how you are to call upon God'. The Lord's Prayer and Augustine's Mystagogy, in *Seeing through the Eyes of Faith*, 349–374. Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *The Original Bishops: Office and Order in the First Christian Communities* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2014), 22 cites Cypr. *dom. orat.* 9 as an indication that in Carthage, in Cyprian's times, the Our Father was prayed as soon as the baptised emerged from the font. According to Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 365f., it is not clear whether the baptised prayed in this way immediately after emerging from the font, or after the anointing and the imposition of hands, but the former possibility seems more plausible.

baptism. As their faith was required for their baptism, so the first step of their new life and status of God's children would be to pray to God the Father, as Jesus taught his disciples.²⁴⁵

Then the newly baptised were anointed with chrism on their heads and hands were laid upon their heads as well.²⁴⁶ This was a sign of spiritual anointing with the Holy Spirit, when the neophytes were incorporated into the body of Christ and received their part in the royal priesthood of Christian believers.²⁴⁷ These rites were considered an inseparable part of the baptism and they sealed the sacrament of baptism.²⁴⁸ The 'children' (*infantes*)—as Augustine calls the newly baptised regardless of age—received then new white garments, in all probability made of white linen, and special sandals to wear for the following week.²⁴⁹ Their heads were covered with a veil, as a sign that they were set free.²⁵⁰

Prepared in this way, they entered the great basilica and appeared before the assembly who was waiting for the neophytes to celebrate with them the Eucharist. They followed the bishop to the chancel (*cancelli*) which held the altar that was separated from the congregation by a low railing.²⁵¹ For the first time they were present at the *missa fidelium*, they finally saw the 'sanctification' of the bread and wine and received the 'sacrament of the faithful'.²⁵²

Later on Easter Sunday, they participated again in the Eucharist in the church and received their instruction on its meaning.²⁵³ This instruction continued during the whole Easter week, called 'the octave days of the *infantes*',²⁵⁴ when the neophytes received the mystagogical catecheses on the meaning of their baptism and the Eucharist they had received during the Easter night.²⁵⁵ They had the privilege of standing within the *cancelli*, near to the altar, set off from the rest of the faithful both by their dress and by liturgical space.²⁵⁶

245 Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 367.

246 Aug. *bapt.* 3. 16. 21; *Io. eu. tr.* 118. 5 (CSEL 51: 212 f.; CCL 36: 657).

247 Aug. s. 227; *ciu.* 17. 4, 9 (SC 116: 234–243; CCL 48: 555).

248 Aug. s. 2290 = Guelf. 17. 3; 324. 1; *c. litt. Pet.* 2. 105. 239 (MA 1: 497; PL 38: 1447; CSEL 52: 153); De Latte, 217.

249 Aug. s. 120. 3; 223. 1; 229A = Guelf. 7. 1; 228. 1, 3; 228B = Guelf. 8. 1; 226. 1; 260C = Mai 94. 7; *ep.* 55. 19. 35 (PL 38: 677, 1092; MA 1: 462; PL 38: 1101 f.; MA 1: 464 f.; PL 38: 1098; MA 1: 338; CSEL 34/1: 209).

250 Aug. s. 378 (PL 39: 1673 f.).

251 Aug. s. 260C = Mai 94. 7 (MA 1: 338).

252 Aug. s. 228. 3 (PL 38: 1102).

253 Aug. s. 229. 3 (MA 1: 31).

254 Aug. s. 376A. 1 (PL 39: 1669, tr. Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 381).

255 Aug. s. 229E–O, R–V; Ferguson, 787.

256 Poque, 'Introduction', 91; Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 382.

Changing a name at baptism occurred only rarely in Late Antiquity, although it was not an unknown practice. Augustine did not require or advise his neophytes to change their names at baptism.²⁵⁷

A week after Easter, Augustine's baptismal instruction was finally finished and the newly baptised enjoyed the same status as all of the other faithful. Needless to say, for Augustine, the process of conversion was not finished with baptism. The conversion meant for him a life-long process and the real birth would await the Christian only at the end of times.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Rebillard, *Christians*, 67.

²⁵⁸ Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 318.

PART 2

Quodvultdeus's Catechetical Programme



Catechumenate and Giving the Name for Baptism

Bishop Quodvultdeus's care for those who decided to be baptised in the Catholic Church during the unsteady years following Augustine's death, the 430s, is the core of this book. I have followed the historical circumstances of this era and the question of Quodvultdeus's life and work in Chapters One and Two. Then, Augustine's catechumenate and his pastoral care for those who decided to adhere to the Christian faith has been followed in Chapter Three, to provide us with a comparison point to this Part to help analyse Quodvultdeus's sermons and other works that witness to his catechetical programme. The scarcity of ancient textual sources sometimes forces researchers of the first Christian centuries, and especially of their liturgy and other practices, to interpolate the available sources to sketch at least a recognisable picture of the life of the Church at that time. However, as will be shown in this Part, it seems imprudent to make hasty conclusions based upon analogies. With the knowledge of other Latin writers that preceded Quodvultdeus, especially of Ambrose and Augustine, it is too easy to read Quodvultdeus's sermons with the preconception of an already set sequence of pre-baptismal rites that should have helped in the process of making the genuine decision to refuse sin and evil and to cling to faith in God, as the Church preached it. Despite the temporal and geographical closeness of Augustine's Hippo Regius and Quodvultdeus's Carthage, despite Augustine's frequent travels to Carthage and giving sermons there, and despite the personal friendship between the two clerics, there is no evidence that exactly the same pre-baptismal rites were celebrated in the two cities and that Quodvultdeus's sermons describe the same reality that can be read from Augustine's sermons and other works. Much room has been left for hypotheses, but I find it imprudent to harmonise the account provided by Quodvultdeus's catecheses with the shape of Augustine's baptismal preparation as described briefly in the previous chapter of this book. It is not my intention to provide another reconstruction of liturgical rites: their procedure was not the object of Quodvultdeus's sermons. I would like to go along with Quodvultdeus's intention to explain the meaning of what is essential in the reality that is expressed with baptism and other accompanying rites. In other words, I would like to point out the mystagogical aspect of Quodvultdeus's preaching.

At the same time, given the genre of these sermons that were conveyed in order to move the concrete audience to conversion, to the desire for a new life in Christ, I consider it essential to analyse these sermons first as such and

not to use them straight away for conclusions regarding Quodvultdeus's liturgy or theology. This is the reason why much space will be given to nine sermons which are part of the baptismal preparation; each of them focuses on slightly different topics, although they share the same imagery and motifs. This Part Two provides a reconstruction of the pre-baptismal preparation as witnessed by Quodvultdeus's sermons. After a brief section on the entrance into the catechumenate in Chapter Four, I shall focus on what Quodvultdeus says on the intense part of the pre-baptismal 'training' in Chapter Five, where much attention is given to the renunciation of evil and the adhesion to the faith, being two decisive attitudes to which Quodvultdeus dedicates six of his sermons. Lastly, Chapter Six will research Quodvultdeus's baptismal theology present in the sermons that were delivered in the days immediately preceding the candidates' baptism. This will prepare the ground for Part Three, where Quodvultdeus's approach to the catechumens' and *competentes*' preparation will be presented. The bishop applied certain strategies to prepare his *baptizandi* well for life as baptised believers: based upon allegiance and love to the Mother Church, the Bride of the Christ-Bridegroom, Quodvultdeus endeavoured to build his community and to defend it against external enemies, that is, the heretical views that divide the body of Christ.

1 The Catechumenate and Its Entrance Rite

The first instruction of the newcomers, as we observed in Augustine's works, is not covered in the baptismal catecheses or other writings of Quodvultdeus. However, his *Liber promissionibus et praedictorum dei* is a lengthy example of the exposition of the entire history of salvation proposed by Augustine in his *De catechizandis rudibus*.¹ This book, in fact, could have possibly served as a manual for the catechists, who could find inspiration in it for their ministry to the newcomers and catechumens.²

Moreover, the exordia of *De symbolo* I and III (s1 and s3) witness to the existence of the same rite of *signatio* which marked the entrance into the catechumenate as the works of Augustine also show.³ Although the signing of the cross or the sacrament of salt are not documented directly,⁴ Quodvultdeus reminds the candidates for baptism that the Church has conceived them in the womb

1 See pp. 106–110 above.

2 Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 66–72.

3 See pp. 106–110 above.

4 Saxer, *Rites*, 405.

'through this most holy sign of the cross'.⁵ While this could be considered a literary device solely,⁶ such an allusion would require an important passage rite at the beginning of the catechumenate, to which it could be related. It is not a general sign of the cross, but the one that marked the newcomers' entrance into the catechumenate, identical to the one Quodvultdeus describes in his *De ultima quarta feria* (UQF), where he reminds the audience that they have been signed with the cross on their foreheads as part of their journey towards baptism.⁷ There cannot be a doubt that Quodvultdeus speaks clearly about this rite of *signatio*, during which the new catechumens were signed with the cross on their foreheads.

What is more, the bishop uses Augustine's imagery of the catechumenate conceived as the time in the womb of the Mother Church to bring them to new life with their baptism.⁸ In this way, the catechumens were already made part of the Church and the Church was responsible for them.⁹ Meanwhile, she would spiritually nourish them 'with proper food', that is, with God's word, but also with all the rites that mark the important moments of the baptismal preparation enacted through the ministry of God's servants.¹⁰

Besides this biological allegory of the time in the womb which should lead to the 'birth' of the catechumens at their baptism, Quodvultdeus calls the catechumens in his sermon *De accedentibus ad gratiam I* (A1) to the school of the 'heavenly Teacher'. This teacher trains spiritual children both not to follow the devil anymore, and to love the humble Christ who calls them to wisdom;¹¹ the image of the school (*auditorium*) evokes the oral character of the instruction, and the quote of Psalm 33:6 might point towards the morning hour of the catechesis.¹² What the 'small ones of Christ'¹³ should learn during the time of their catechumenate is to leave the pride associated with the devil and to move their allegiance and love towards the 'humble Christ'. The movement of renouncing the devil and accepting Christ is the same as that expressed in other sermons dedicated to the occasion of the scrutiny.¹⁴ The arms of the humble Christ are open to anyone in any condition. What this journey towards wisdom and

5 S1 1. 3; S3 1. 1 (CCL 60: 305, 348): *per crucis signum; per sacratissimum crucis signum*.

6 Saxer, *Rites*, 405.

7 UQF 2. 12 (CCL 60: 397).

8 See p. 110 above.

9 Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, 93 n. 4.

10 S1 1. 3 (CCL 60: 348).

11 A1 1. 6–9 (CCL 60: 441).

12 Saxer, *Rites*, 406.

13 A1 1. 8 (CCL 60: 441): *paruuli Christi*.

14 See pp. 155–164 below.

understanding offers is ‘peace of soul’, which they can find in Christ’s humility. This peace is a fruit of the changed allegiance, but also of the acquired knowledge and love towards Christ. No one would be persuaded to be baptised in the Catholic Church, especially in the troubled times of the Vandal invasion, if he or she did not have the desire for something that surpasses this world. Quodvultdeus offers four basic situations which offer knowledge, healing, light, and life.¹⁵ In this way, the ‘school of Christ’ is not only an intellectual exercise, but it involves all human existence and capacity to perceive and act. The catechumenate teaching has, according to the Bishop of Carthage, two main focuses: oral education and liturgical rites which would come during the final weeks of the preparation for baptism.

2 Inspiring the *Competentes*

As in most ancient Churches, even in Carthage, the catechumens enrolled their name for baptism at some point.¹⁶ Differently from Augustine, Quodvultdeus’s works never use the term *competentes*, *baptizandi*, or *electi* for the candidates for baptism in this second stage of the catechumenate: if I continue to refer to them in this way in the following pages, it is only for the sake of convenience. During this period, the instruction of the *competentes* in the form of their participation on the first part of the liturgy continued and while we lack the witness of a particular instruction addressed to this category of the candidates of baptism, comparable to Ambrose’s education in Milan or Augustine’s in Hippo, it is probable that it might have taken place, as the existence of CN, and especially of the two sermons delivered in the week before baptism—*De ultima quarta feria* and *De cataclysmo* (UQF; C)—attest.¹⁷ Besides the instruction, the *competentes* participated in various rites of scrutinies or exorcisms that were intended to test the genuine intention of the candidates, to probe their way of life and their decision to abandon the sinful behaviour and allegiance to evil, and to help them undergo an inner transformation or conversion. Their existence is witnessed by s3 which recalls the *competentes* and what they have gone through on their journey of intensive preparation for baptism:

All the rites that were and are enacted among you through the ministry of God’s servants by exorcism, prayers, spiritual songs, insufflations, the

¹⁵ A1 1. 6–9 (CCL 60: 441).

¹⁶ CN 1. 22; A1 2. 5 (CCL 60: 382, 442).

¹⁷ See pp. 211–219 below.

goatskin, bowed necks, bare feet—this trembling endured for the gift of full peace of mind—all these things, I say, are food which nourishes you in the womb, so that your joyful mother may show you, reborn from baptism, to Christ.¹⁸

It is possible that various rites listed by Quodvultdeus in this passage were regularly repeated during Lent and culminated with the solemn ceremony that took place in the weeks immediately before the Easter when the candidates would have been baptised and when they made their decisive and public step from the old life to the new.¹⁹ The character of these rites was penitential: the discipline was meant to free the *competentes* from their allegiance to sin and the devil and free them so that they could accept Christ and the faith in their lives. The role of the ministers of the Church is clearly mentioned: the bishop, together with the priests, deacons, and possibly exorcists or other orders of clergy could have been present and active at this stage of ritual formation.

2.1 De cantico novo

To this group of those who entered the intensive phase of their preparation which would eventually culminate with their baptism on the Easter night, Quodvultdeus addresses his sermon *On the New Song* (*De cantico nouo*; CN; CPL 405).²⁰ The discourse seems closely related to Augustine's *sermo* 216, which was delivered on a similar occasion, and it could have been preached at the beginning of Lent.²¹ The sermon opens with a call to pass over the old existence and come to the new one:

Everyone who desires the baptism of Christ yearns for new life. Let him then leave behind what is old so that he may arrive at what is new. For in the past there was the old covenant, the old song, the old man. But now there is the new covenant and the new song, on account of the new man!²²

18 S3 l. 3 (CCL 60: 349; Finn 67): *Omnia sacramenta quae acta sunt et aguntur in uobis per ministerium seruorum dei, exorcismis, orationibus, canticis spiritalibus, insufflationibus, cilicio, inclinatione ceruicium, humilitate pedum, —pauor ipse omni securitate appetendus—, haec omnia, ut dixi, escae sunt, quae uos reficiunt in utero, ut renatos ex baptismo hilares uos mater exhibeat Christo.*

19 Saxer, *Rites*, 406 f.

20 CPL 405; CCL 60: 379–392. De Simone, 278; Saxer, *Rites*, 403.

21 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 188 f.

22 CN l. 1 (CCL 60: 381; tr. Heintz 43): *Omnis qui baptismum Christi desiderat, uitam nouam concupiscit. Transeat ergo a uetustate, ut perueniat ad nouitatem. Prius enim fuit testamen-*

This incipit follows closely a famous motive Augustine also liked.²³ There can be no doubt about the setting of the sermon to the period of the intensive preparation for baptism. The passage from the 'old man' to the 'new' one is, in fact, crucial for baptism: it describes the inner transformation of a person, described by Late Antiquity authors as *conversio*.²⁴ In fact, the conversion is not only one of the main topics of CN, but it is the leitmotif which follows as a red line in all of Quodvultdeus's sermons related to the later stage of the catechumenate. The *conversio* is the goal that the bishop desires to achieve in the lives of those who have been entrusted to him and whom he wishes to prepare well for the baptism.²⁵ For Augustine, an authentic conversion of the person was necessary for the efficacy of the baptism;²⁶ various passages of Quodvultdeus's sermons show the same concern of the bishop.

Later in the sermon, the bishop hints at the 'sufficient provisions' (*competentem sitarciam*).²⁷ Although it is used as a piece of a larger metaphor, applicable to the more general public, perhaps the listeners could have understood it as a wordplay on their status of *competentes* even if Quodvultdeus does not call them in this way. Similarly, sermon *De symbolo 1* (S1) presents to the *competentes* the baptismal creed as 'an agreeable food' (*competentem cibum*) from which 'God grants' to the *competentes* 'growth'.²⁸ The various institutions the *competentes* would meet during their Lenten preparation would be this '*competent* food' that the bishop is set to provide.²⁹ And, lastly, at the end of the sermon, the bishop asks his 'brothers' (*fratres*) to 'aid him by their prayers in the sacred font'.³⁰ The term 'brothers' was not reserved only for the baptised,

tum uetus, canticum uetus, homo uetus: nunc autem testamentum nouum, canticum nouum, propter hominem nouum.

- 23 Aug. *en. Ps.* 32. 1; 97. 1; 149. 1; s. 163. 3: for the topic of the 'new song' in Augustine see H. Rondet, 'Le thème du Cantique Nouveau chez saint Augustin', in *L'homme devant Dieu. Mélanges offerts au Père Henri de Lubac. 1. Exégèse et patristique* (Paris: Aubier, 1964), 341–352. Similarly, Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 96. 3 speaks also on the desire of the catechumens for baptism.
- 24 For the overall view of the term in Augustine, see Goulven Madec, 'Conversio', in AL 1 (1986–1994), 1282–1294. Conversion in Antiquity in the Christian and non-Christian context is studied by A.D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1988).
- 25 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 197.
- 26 Aug. *bapt.* 4. 3. 4; 4. 21. 28; 5. 22. 30; 6. 4. 6; 12. 19; 7. 3. 5; Madec, 'Conversio', 1286.
- 27 CN 2. 15 (CCL 60: 383).
- 28 S1 1. 2 (CCL 60: 305).
- 29 S3 1. 3 (CCL 60: 348).
- 30 CN 10. 11 (CCL 60: 392; tr. Heintz, 48).

but Augustine used it, in some instances, and apparently according to a typical African usage, also for catechumens because of their faith in Christ.³¹ Undoubtedly, Quodvultdeus speaks in this way to those who enter the last phase of their baptismal preparation.

There is no indication that the sermon was delivered as a special catechesis: seemingly, it took place during an ordinary liturgy as a part of the *missa catechumenorum*, where it came after the prayers, biblical readings, and psalms, as was customary for the African liturgical tradition. It touches topics relevant for the baptised Christians as well, for example, when the bishops turn to those believers who turn back from chastity to concupiscence, or to the consecrated persons who easily give up their vows in front of God.³² The audience of the sermon was mixed, as was usual also for Augustine's catechesis of the *competentes* in Hippo. The preparation for the baptism of the new Christians offers an opportunity to the bishop to renew the commitment also of those who have been baptised one or more or even many years before and whose decisiveness and genuineness in their life of faith might have become lukewarm or even have gone astray.³³

The manuscript tradition handed CN to us as a part of the 'homogenous series' of the sermons *De quattuor virtutibus caritatis* (QVC), CN, UQF, C, TB1, and S1–3, and R. Braun included it in his critical edition of the works attributed to Quodvultdeus in CCL 60. The sermon refers to a number of Augustine's concepts and it even reuses verbatim some passages of Augustine's s. 306B = Denis 18.³⁴ This practice to take a phrase or a paragraph of another author and use it again in a different context is quite common in early Christian literature and it is not surprising that a younger friend of Augustine, so devoted to his older master, would reuse a part of his sermon in the process of *competentes* instruction. In this sense, the passages that CN draws from Augustine's s. 306B do not weaken the arguments for Quodvultdeus's authorship.

Now let us look more closely at the CN. The homily lacks any allusion to singular historical events or institutions, except for a reference to the Pelagians. Augustine engaged in discussion with them only in 418, and M. Pignot—who does not accept Quodvultdeus's authorship of the sermon—dates CN, therefore, to the 420s, as it does not show any signs of endangerment from the Van-

31 Aug. s. 56. 12; 57. 13; *Io. eu. tr.* 12. 3; Lamirande, 'Catechumenus', 789.

32 CN 4. 9 (CCL 60: 386).

33 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 198.

34 CN 3. 6–4. 8 (CCL 60: 385f.) = Aug. s. 306B = Denis 18. 1f. (MA 1: 90f.) with only minor word alterations.

dals.³⁵ Despite the extensive part of CN being dedicated to the heresies, which is a typical mark of works attributed to Quodvultdeus, it would not be unusual even for Augustine to include a warning against them in his baptismal catechesis.³⁶ The grouping of Manichaeans, Arians, and Pelagians does not offer any clues, apart from the fact that it is consistent with the rest of Quodvultdeus's work.³⁷ The latest date for its composition would be the bishop's deportation in 440. As it was probably preached during the Lent, it does not seem that there would be time for a normal preparation for baptism in the spring of 440, so the *terminus ante quem* would rather be March 439. Considering the calm tone of the sermon, lacking any mention of immediate danger from the Vandals, I would opt for an earlier dating to the first years of Quodvultdeus's episcopacy, perhaps even before the first treaty between the Romans and the Vandals in 435. The suggested dating would be therefore 432/4–435, and the latest date of its composition is 439.

The sermon is structured as follows:

1. *Exordium*: the old and the new (1)
2. *Section I*: The Way (2–3)
 - a. The goal of the way (2)
 - b. Christ the Way (3)
3. *Section II*: The Church and three types of people (4–9)
 - a. Three types of people (4)
 - b. Christ the Truth in the Church (5)
 - c. The *aberrantes*: the heretics (6–9)
 - i. Manichaeans who deny the humanity of Christ (6)
 - ii. Arians who deny the divinity of Christ (7)
 - iii. Pelagians who put their hope in man (8)
 - iv. Other heretics (9)
4. *Peroratio*: Appeal to go ahead (10)

The exordium supports its initial statement on the passing of the old realities and the coming of the new ones through biblical testimonies.³⁸ Then it turns to two types of listeners: to the 'spiritual' and to the 'fleshly',³⁹ where it wishes to respond to the objections of the latter, that there are no signs of anything

35 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 188f., as in other cases, does not accept Quodvultdeus's authorship and sets the sermon to the 420–430s in Africa.

36 Aug. s. 252. 4 (PL 38: 1174), closely related to the image of the ship, delivered during the Easter week, contains such a warning.

37 See Chapter Eight below.

38 CN 1. 2–4 (CCL 60: 381).

39 CN 1. 5f. (CCL 60: 381).

new. The world turns just as it did before and there is no change in the rhythm of the days and years.⁴⁰ For an understanding of the New Testament, preached by Christians, it is necessary to see spiritually: 'Behold, listen to the Apostle: *Why do you try to see, you carnal listener, through bodily eyes?* Sharpen your mind, so that you might be able to understand the saying, *The old things have passed away; behold, they have been made new* (2 Corinthians 5:17).'⁴¹ Quodvultdeus follows Augustine's distinction between the 'bodily' or 'fleshly eye' (*oculus carnis*) and spiritual understanding, as can be found in Book 10 of his *Confessions* and the same can also be found in S2.⁴² Spiritual understanding is necessary to grasp the Christian truths that would be disclosed to the candidates for baptism in the pre-baptismal and baptismal rites and catechesis. Quodvultdeus's use of allegorical exegesis of the Bible, attested in his other works, would become one of the crucial means for the *competentes* training.

Quoting the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:47), Quodvultdeus shows that 'the old man' is 'Adam from the earth', and 'the new man' is 'Christ, God and man, sent from heaven'.⁴³ The preacher's audience is also involved in the topic of the old and the new, as it also involves them and the described change does not relate only to the cosmic order, but also the micro-cosmic one. What was old is gone: the listeners who were sons of Adam coming from the earth, fleshly children who adored idols made of stone and who were subject to mortality and living in the dying world. Now the new reality was coming, as they become 'spiritual children' coming from heaven, who adore one true God and have the promise of immortality in the heavenly Jerusalem: 'It is this new city that you, who have given your names to be enrolled, desire to reach.'⁴⁴

Jerusalem, the 'new city', is the goal that the *baptizandi* are set to reach. They are already being transformed from their mundane existences to spiritual ones, but their understanding of reality changes as well, as they can conceive what is hidden to physical eyes but can be seen with the 'eyes' of the intellect. The remaining weeks of the preparation for baptism was to prepare the audience for this journey or pilgrimage to the true 'homeland' and it was Quodvult-

40 CN 1. 7–11 (CCL 60: 381f.).

41 CN 1. 13 (CCL 60: 382; tr. Heintz 44): *Ecce audi apostolum: Quid quaeris, carnalis auditor, per oculus carnis respicere? Erige mentis aciem, ut quod dicitur possis intelligere: 'Vetera transierunt, ecce facta sunt noua'.*

42 S2 1–2; S3 2.1 ff. (CCL 60: 335–337, 351f.).

43 CN 1. 14 (CCL 60: 382): *Transit Adam, homo uetus factus ex limo: uenit Christus, Deus homo missus e caelo.*

44 CN 1. 18–21, 22 (CCL 60: 382; tr. Heintz 44): *Ad hanc ciuitatem nouam peruenisse cupitis, qui nomina uestra conscribenda dedistis.* Aug. s. 216. 2, 4 (PL 38: 1077–1080) plays on the same contrast between the earthly and heavenly realities as CN.

deus's task to provide for them all that was necessary to be set for the journey, with a desire to reach its goal.

In the first part of his discourse, Quodvultdeus needs to define the journey ahead of the candidates. This voyage will not end with their baptism, but their final objective is 'the homeland' (*patria*).⁴⁵ It was God himself who was for early Augustine his 'homeland',⁴⁶ but later on, he frequently speaks about 'the heavenly homeland',⁴⁷ but it is in his *De doctrina Christiana* where Quodvultdeus's teacher developed the image of human life as a pilgrimage to the heavenly homeland.⁴⁸ Sermons attributed to Quodvultdeus, and especially CN, reveal the bishop's dependence on Augustine's idea that it is Christ himself who is the Way to the homeland and that for the Christian, it is the way of following Christ's humility that would lead him to the heavenly Jerusalem.⁴⁹ To achieve his goal to persuade his *competentes* to make a radical change not only of their understanding but also of their moral stances, Quodvultdeus uses common imagery of life described as a sea voyage:

Let us prepare our provisions, let us take advantage of the ship and board it, the ship which is at once both faith and the cross, and let not the anchor, that is, the hope of our salvation, be absent. Let us tighten the ropes, which are the various virtues, let us lift the sail of charity, let us call upon a favourable wind, which is the Word of God; let us drain the bilgewater; that is, may the conscience be cleansed of sin by almsgiving. May the course of this vessel not be impeded: let our hands work to keep it on course. The one who said, *My hands were lifted up before Him at night, and I was not deceived* (Psalm 76:3), was draining off the bilgewater by hand. Let us not ignore our sins; they may be slight, but they are many. One strong wave floods the ship, and shipwreck threatens; but moisture, seeping through the cracks and coming into the bilgewater, has the same effect unless drained from there. Then let the bilgewater be drained, let mercy not be neglected; for almsgiving frees from death, and itself washes away sins.⁵⁰

45 CN 2. 1 (CCL 60: 383).

46 Aug. *sol.* 1. 4 (PL 32: 871).

47 For example, Aug. *conf.* 7. 14. 20 (CCL 27: 106); *civ.* 1. 9 (CCL 47: 10).

48 Aug. *doctr. chr.* 1. 4 (CSEL 32: 8).

49 Aug. *doctr. chr.* 1. 10 ff.; *conf.* 7. 21. 27; *civ.* 10. 29; *ep. Io. tr.* 1. 5, etc. See J.J. O'Donnell, 'Patria', in AL 4/3–4 (2014), 525 f.

50 CN 2. 4–8 (CCL 60: 383; tr. Heintz, 44): *Praeparemus sitarciam, apprehendamus et ascendamus nauem, fidem simul et crucem, nec desit anchora, spes nostrae salutis; extendamus funes, diuersas uirtutes, uela caritatis collocemus, inuocemus uentum prosperum, uerbum*

Not only because Carthage was one of the most important harbours of the western Mediterranean, the image of life as a ship or a voyage was easily accessible even to the non-Christians, and we find it also in other sermons of Quodvultdeus, especially in c where it serves as a metaphor for the Christian life after baptism.⁵¹ The allegory of man's life as a sea voyage was familiar to the public since Plato.⁵² Much later, Cicero compared the ship to the state,⁵³ but it was also common in the Jewish-Hellenistic literature where the ship can be likened to the house of Jacob, that is, to Israel.⁵⁴ Quite soon after, this symbol was transformed by Christians, analogically, to the Church and to the life of a Christian believer: we can find the imagery of a ship as early as in the second century in Justin's *First Apology*.⁵⁵ Not long after that, the image made its way into early Christian art, as the symbol of a ship heading for the port can be found in the funerary context as a sign of hope and eternity. The source for other African writers in using this imagery was Tertullian, who applies it to the Church tossed by the waves of the present world.⁵⁶ When he compares various types of death to violence that can avail the ship, on the shipwrecks of life, or on the overthrown navigation of the soul, he uses metaphors already used in pagan culture and classical education.⁵⁷

Augustine developed this ecclesiological interpretation of the ship in a similar way to Tertullian. When commenting on Matthew 14:24–33, he affirms that 'in this world every single person is a foreign traveller' and that 'by the very

Dei; exauriamus sentinam, a peccatis per eleemosynas mundetur conscientia. Non impediatur huius nostri cursus nauigii, operemur manibus ut hoc possimus. Manibus suis sentinam exhauriebat qui dicebat: 'Manibus meis coram eo nocte, et non sum deceptus'. Non negligamus nostra peccata: minuta sunt, sed multa sunt. Fluctus unus ualidus irruens obruit nauem, minaturque naufragium: humor autem per rimas influens et in sentinam ueniens, nisi subinde siccetur, hoc idem facit. Ergo exhauriatur sentina, non negligatur misericordia; quia eleemosyna a morte liberat, et ipsa purgat peccata.

51 See pp. 216 ff. below.

52 Plat. *leg.* 803.

53 Cic. *pro P. Sestio* 20.

54 L. Gambrassi, 'Nave', in *Temi di iconografia paleocristiana*, ed. F. Bisconti (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto dell'Archeologia Cristiana, 2000), 228.

55 Justin, *apol.* 1. 55. 3 (SC 507: 276).

56 Tert. *bapt.* 8. 4 (CCL 1: 283). Ps.-Clem. *ep. Iacob* 14. 15 (PG 2: 49) and other writers develop the ship symbolics: Christ is the helmsman, the bishop a watch, presbyters are seamen, etc. Similarly, Hipp. *antichr.* 59. See also Jean Daniélou, *I simboli cristiani primitivi* (Roma: Arkeios, 1997), 69–81 and Hermann Josef Vogt, *Immagini della Chiesa delle origini* (Milano: Jaca Book, 2000), 22–29.

57 Tert. *an.* 52. 4 (CCL 2:859); R.W.H. Miller, *One Firm Anchor. The Church and the Merchant Seafarer, an Introductory History* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2012), 26.

nature of the voyage we are bound to endure turbulence and storms, but it's essential that at least we should stay in the boat'.⁵⁸ The boat is 'the Church ... being tossed about and battered by the storms of temptations and trial'.⁵⁹ Although it is dangerous to be on a ship in a storm, the swimmer is in an incomparably more dangerous position, as 'sooner or later the vastness of the sea will defeat him'.⁶⁰ It is the ship alone that 'carries the disciples, and receives Christ on board. Sure, it's in distress and danger in the sea, but without it we all perish immediately'.⁶¹ In a sermon delivered during the Easter week, Augustine offers once more a very colourful ecclesiological explanation when he speaks about two ships filled with those who were saved by the Word of God from 'the age of time, with its turbulent waves, dangerous storms, and ruinous shipwrecks' and which represent 'the two peoples for whom the Lord became the cornerstone, as for two walls, to unite them in himself, as they converge from different directions'.⁶² For Augustine, these ships are a symbol of the Church from the Jews and the nations.⁶³

Quodvultdeus, however, offers a different interpretation, and not an ecclesiological one. Instead, he likens the ship to the life of the spiritual man—the life of a baptised Christian—who endeavoured to make the journey to the heavenly Jerusalem. His idea might be following that of his predecessor Cyprian who, as a bishop of Carthage, envisioned his life as heading to a safe port of the Church,⁶⁴ At the same time, he uses the example of Peter walking and drowning in the sea, using the same text of Matthew 14:23–31 that was employed already by Tertullian and Augustine in their ship metaphor.⁶⁵ The element of pumping the bilgewater can be found already in Ambrose's *Commentary on Psalm 118*⁶⁶ but Quodvultdeus receives it most likely through Augustine who uses a very similar

58 Aug. s. 75. 2 (PL 38: 475; tr. Hill 305): *Nemo quippe in hoc saeculo non peregrinus est ... Ex ipso autem itinere fluctus tempestatesque patimur.*

59 Aug. s. 75. 4 (PL 38: 475; tr. Hill 306): *Interea navis ... id est, Ecclesia, fluctuat et quatitur tempestatibus tentationum.*

60 Aug. s. 75. 2 (PL 38: 475; tr. Hill 305): *aliquando magnitudine maris victus absorbetur et mergitur.*

61 Aug. s. 252. 4 (PL 38: 1173; tr. Hill 306): *Sola portat discipulos, et recipit Christum. Periclitatur quidem in mari: sed sine illa statim peritur.*

62 Aug. s. 252. 3 (PG 38: 1173; tr. Hill 133): *In hoc saeculum fluctibus turbulentum, et tempestatibus periculosum, et naufragiis molestum ... Quibus populis duobus, tanquam duobus parietibus lapis angularis factus est Dominus, ut eos in se conjungeret ex diverso venientes.*

63 Augustine might have even used the image of two ships in reaction to the Manichaean myth of two ships, representing Sun and Moon, as he describes in *haer.* 46. 7 f.

64 Cyp. *ep.* 68. 3 (CSEL 3/2: 746).

65 CN 2. 13 (CCL 60: 383).

66 Ambr. *expos. ps. CXVIII* 5. 34 (SAEMO 9: 226).

imagery in his explanation of why a Christian has to ask for forgiveness of even the small sins every day in his sermons on the Lord's Prayer.⁶⁷

The maritime imagery—familiar to residents of Carthage with its busy port—becomes in Quodvultdeus a powerful allegory of the life of the *baptizandi* and of what they have to do during their preparation for the baptism and beyond in order to reach the destination. It's their programme for the Lent. Each of the elements of the ship metaphor is coupled by a quote from Paul's letters that gives it a more concrete form:⁶⁸ 'When he said: *Faith, hope, and love abide: the greatest of these is love*, he was lifting the sails. When he said: *May the Word of Christ dwell abundantly in you*, he was calling upon a favourable wind',⁶⁹ etc. As in the previous tradition of baptismal instruction, the theory is entwined with practice, the listening to God's word is joined by the works of charity, penance, and almsgiving. It is not enough to learn, but also to do: and the candidates have as their example and their 'travel guide' the apostle Paul who taught what he actually did.⁷⁰ What is more, they cannot rely on their own strength, but on God's grace that guards their safe passage.⁷¹ The fear of the hardships and the danger of shipwreck should not stop the *competentes*, as there are many others who already crossed the sea and enjoy the chanting of 'alleluia' in 'the eternal and most happy homeland'.⁷²

Having in mind the goal of the Christian journey, Quodvultdeus has to show to the candidates the way to the destination. At first, taking off from the ship allegory he turns to Christ 'the excellent Helmsman'⁷³ but he adds immediately that this Christ himself is the way to the heavenly homeland as he said: *I am the way* (John 14:6).⁷⁴ The bishop uses the concept of a 'beast of burden' (*iumentum*) present in Augustine's Christmas sermons that represents the body of the believer that is necessary for the soul to be delivered to 'the heights of God', to Jerusalem.⁷⁵ The body has to be tamed by fasting in order not to drag the mind down to the earth.⁷⁶ Once again, Quodvultdeus does not forget to point out

67 Aug. s. 58. 9. 10 (CCL 41Aa: 210).

68 CN 2. 14–23 (CCL 60: 383f.).

69 CN 2. 18–19 (CCL 60: 384): *Quando dicebat: 'Manet fides, spes, caritas; maior horum caritas', uela collocabat. Quando dicebat: 'Verbum Dei habitet in uobis abundanter', uentum prosperum inuocabat.*

70 CN 2. 24 (CCL 60: 384).

71 CN 2. 9 (CCL 60: 383).

72 CN 2. 9–11 (CCL 60: 383): *cantemus Alleluia, ut laeti ac securi ingrediamur sempiternam ac felicissimam patriam.*

73 CN 2. 24 (CCL 60: 384): *o optime gubernator*; see also CN 3. 5 and C 1. 6 (CCL 60: 385, 409).

74 CN 3. 1–2 (CCL 60: 384).

75 CN 3. 2–5 (CCL 60: 384f.); Aug. s. 184. 1; 189. 4.

76 CN 3. 5 (CCL 60: 385). Aug. s. 400. 2, 5 shows an even more balanced relationship between

that it is necessary to understand this 'way with Christ' in a spiritual manner. From this moment on, he closely follows Augustine's *sermo* 306B (= s. Denis 18), preached on the feast of the martyr Quadratus, starting with a powerful verbatim quote of Augustine: 'You walk, you see, if you love; I mean, it isn't by steps, but by the affections that we run toward God.'⁷⁷

Quodvultdeus takes from Augustine's imagery of the Christian life as a 'walking ahead' on the way that is Christ. In the second part of the sermon he urges them to continue running and hasten on their way.⁷⁸ Borrowing a whole passage nearly word-for-word from Augustine's *sermo* 306B,⁷⁹ Quodvultdeus warns against three categories of people: those who remain to stay in the place where they are (*remanentes*), those who turn back (*retro redeuntes*), and those who walk out of the way (*aberrantes*):⁸⁰ The first category of the *remanentes* consists of those who consider themselves wise enough, who are satisfied with how they are, and do not make any progress.⁸¹ For the other two categories of people, Quodvultdeus already continues on his own, though strongly influenced by Augustine's thinking. For the second sort of people, those who turn back (*retro redeuntes*), the bishop uses, similarly to Augustine,⁸² the example of Lot's wife who had been set free from Sodom but looked back: she represents those who regress from their life of chastity to incontinence.⁸³ Obviously, Quodvultdeus is targeting not only the catechumens, but also the regular Christian audience that included also the consecrated people: those of them who follow their impure thoughts and, abandoning their vows bring defilement to their bodies, are reprimanded.⁸⁴ The last group of people, the *aberrantes*, are

the soul and the body: if the flesh is 'a burden weighing down the soul as it tries to fly ahead; the more you delight in your higher life, the more ready you are to lay down your earthly burden'. The body, for Augustine, becomes a means for the soul to 'go ahead' towards salvation; 'so there is a kind of marriage between flesh and spirit.'

77 CN 3. 6 (CCL 60: 385); see Aug. s. 306B = s. Denis 18. 1 (MA 1: 90): *Ambulas enim, si amas. Non enim ad Deum passibus, sed affectibus currimus.*

78 CN 4. 6–7 (CCL 60: 385f.).

79 Aug. s. 306B = s. Denis 18. 6 reused in CN 4. 1–8 (CCL 60: 385f.).

80 CN 4. 1 (CCL 60: 385).

81 CN 4. 3–4 (CCL 60: 385).

82 See pp. 106–110 above.

83 De Simone, 269 sees in the mention of salt a liturgical allusion to the 'sacrament of salt'. Saxer, *Rites*, 404 is much less convinced, as he puts this place together with L 1. 16. 23.

84 CN 4. 9–11 (CCL 60: 386). With Saxer, *Rites*, 404 and against De Simone, 269, I do not think that Lot's wife turning into the pillar of salt necessarily alludes to the 'sacrament of salt' that marked the entrance to the catechumenate, as witnessed by Augustine: Quodvultdeus speaks primarily to the *competentes*. For treating the married and virgins, see also Aug. s. 132. 2f.

heretics who abandoned the way who is Christ.⁸⁵ Most of the remaining part of the sermon is a warning against the heretics who claim to preach Christ, but instead they bring their listeners to lies:

If someone preaches Christ, heed and examine what sort of Christ he proclaims in his preaching. For Christ is the Truth. He is proclaimed through the Holy Scriptures, not in dark comers, nor in a hidden fashion, but openly and publicly. *For He has set His tabernacle in the sun* (Psalm 18:6 LXX). That is, He established His Church openly.⁸⁶

Already at this point of their baptismal instruction, the *baptizandi* are reminded that Christ is preached only in the Church, namely, in the Catholic Church.⁸⁷ Perhaps, the reader might be surprised why the bishop feels urged to speak about heresies at this point. The reason is given by the goal, the 'heavenly homeland', that can be reached only travelling on the road that is Christ, God and man. Only a partial knowledge of him does not permit one to arrive at the destination; that is why Quodvultdeus warns against several types of heretics. The 'affections' by which one runs towards God⁸⁸ have to go hand in hand with the right doctrine. The Manichaeans taught a docetic Christology, teaching that Christ did not have a true body and that it were a mere 'spectre' (*fantasma*), and in this way denying his humanity.⁸⁹ The Arians, on the other hand, denied the divinity of Christ and his equality with the Father.⁹⁰ To each of these groups, Quodvultdeus dedicates a demonstration based on the biblical testimonies in favour of the doctrine on the divinity and humanity of Christ, together with the Nicene doctrine on the Trinity.⁹¹ In fact, both positions would make salvation impossible, as they would put in vain the salvific death of Christ, the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). What Quodvultdeus reproaches the third group of heretics, the Pelagians, for is that they rely more on human ability to reach the destination, which is salvation, than on

85 CN 4. 12–13 (CCL 60: 386).

86 CN 5. 3f. (CCL 60: 386f.; tr. Heintz 46): *Si quis tibi Christum praedicat, attende et considera qualem praedicet, ubi praedicet. Christus enim ueritas est; per scripturas sanctas praedicatur; non in angulis, non occulte, sed palam, publice. 'In sole' enim 'posuit tabernaculum suum'; hoc est, in manifesto collocavit ecclesiam suam.*

87 CN 6. 4 (CCL 60: 387).

88 CN 3. 6 (CCL 60: 385).

89 CN 6. 1 (CCL 60: 387).

90 CN 7. 1 (CCL 60. 388).

91 CN 6–7.

Christ's grace.⁹² Only a small section is assigned to other heresies that disrupt the unity of the Church.⁹³

The place of these heresies in the life of the Christians in Carthage will be studied later.⁹⁴ It has to be said that the colourful and rhetorically acute description of the heresies serves, in the first place, to present the true and full Christology, based also upon biblical testimonies. The insertion into the scheme of the 'three types of people' embellished the catechesis and made it more pleasant to listen to. The aim of the preaching was to show the way to the heavenly homeland: but this 'Way' is obviously Christ, true God and true man, as preached by the Catholic Church.⁹⁵ The *competentes* cannot come to baptism and consider Christ just a 'spectre' as the Manichaeans did, or just a man or somebody lesser than the Father like the Arians. They cannot provide the salvation for themselves, and that is why they ask for baptism: they cannot think, as Pelagians did, that they would walk all their way to the heavenly homeland on their own, but that they need God's help.⁹⁶

The message of the entire sermon and the reason why Quodvultdeus dedicated so much of its space to heresies, is again made clear in the final *peroratio*, which brings, similarly to all other eight pre-baptismal homilies, the topic of the Church. The bishop exhorts 'the faithful seeds of Holy Mother, the Catholic Church'⁹⁷ to flee from all heresies and to hasten towards 'the homeland whose citizens are the angels, whose temple is God, whose brilliance is the Son. and whose love is the Holy Spirit. It is the holy city, the blessed city ... We will live, we will reign, we will rejoice.'⁹⁸ At the same time, the 'offspring of mother Church', the life of the *competentes* themselves is undergoing a change, invisible to the 'carnal man' who doubts in the exordium: 'Tell me, I ask you, what things have been made new? Do I see a different sky from before, or the stars shining with a new brightness? ... Has the face of the earth changed or produced strange, unusual fruits?'⁹⁹ The *competentes* on their way to the heavenly Jerusalem are

92 CN 8. 2 (CCL 60: 391). See also pp. 279–281 below.

93 CN 9. 1–3 (CCL 60: 391 f.).

94 See Chapter Eight below.

95 CN 6. 4 (CCL 60: 387).

96 CN 8. 2 (CCL 60: 391).

97 CN 10. 1 (CCL 60: 392; tr. Heintz 48): *fidelia germina sanctae matris Ecclesiae catholicae*. Augustine calls in a similar way the newly baptised *infantes* in his s. 228. 2 (PL 38: 1102).

98 CN 10. 3–6 (CCL 60: 392; tr. Heintz 48): *Currite uelociter recta uia: ipsa enim uos perducit ad patriam; ad illam patriam cuius ciues angeli sunt, cuius templum deus, cuius splendor filius, cuius caritas spiritus sanctus; ciuitas sancta, ciuitas beata ... Viuemus, regnabimus, laetabimur*.

99 CN 1. 6–8 (CCL 60: 381; tr. Heintz 43): *Rogo te, dic quae facta sunt noua? ... Numquid ... terrae facies immutata est aut alia insolita germina procreauit?*

already the new reality that has come with the new covenant. It still needs to be fulfilled in the eschatological eternity, that is, for Quodvultdeus, anchored in the Trinity. The eternal life, which is the destination of his *competentes* and all Christians, means to 'see God, to live with God, to draw our life from God. For our life will be to praise God, and to love without fail.'¹⁰⁰

The end of the sermon recalls again the image of the ship and the way, to remind the audience of their destination.¹⁰¹ At last, the bishop asks his reward for preparing them on their way to the 'homeland': they are not supposed to give him gold or silver, but remember him in prayer at their baptism.¹⁰² According to A. Isola, it is even possible to see here also an allusion to the fiscal rapaciousness of the Vandals that would collect their new patrimony in precious metals and coins.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, it seems to me that two other biblical allusions are even more important. The first of them would be the reference to the selflessness of apostolic ministry in the episode of Acts 3:1–11, where Peter turns to a man crippled from birth with the words: *I have neither silver nor gold, but I will give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!* And Quodvultdeus, ministering to the *baptizandi* wants them, precisely, to 'walk'.¹⁰⁴ The second stems from James 5:16: *So confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another to be cured; the heartfelt prayer of a righteous man very powerfully.* The prayer of a justified person, to whom his sins were forgiven and who has just received a new status of God's childhood, was, therefore, believed to be exceptionally effective. In Hippo, the newly baptised prayed the Lord's Prayer once they emerged from the font.¹⁰⁵ This practice could have possibly existed even in Carthage: already Tertullian and Cyprian, living there in the third century, gave to this prayer a prominent place. That is why the bishop asks for such a reward: after their baptism, they should remember him while praying the Lord's Prayer, especially during the petition for the forgiveness of his sins.

100 CN 10. 6–7 (CCL 60: 392; tr. Heintz 48): *uidere deum, uiuere cum deo, uiuere de deo. Vita enim nostra erit laudare deum, et sine defectu amare.*

101 CN 10. 8 (CCL 60: 392).

102 CN 10. 9–11 (CCL 60: 392).

103 Isola, *Cristiani*, 57 n. 166.

104 CN 10. 2 f. (CCL 60: 392).

105 See p. 126 above.

Renunciation of the Devil and Adhesion to the Faith

For the Christians of Carthage of the fifth century, the unforgettable moment on their journey towards baptism must have been what T.M. Finn calls ‘the pivotal rites’.¹ One night before Easter, probably on the Saturday, the assembly, together with those who desired to be baptised at Easter, gathered in a basilica for a night vigil filled with prayers, the singing of psalms, scrutiny, exorcism, and other rites. During the night, it should have become clear that the *conversio*, required for the candidates’ baptism, really happened and that the *competentes* were, after a time of growth in the womb of the Church during the catechumenate, ready for their birth at baptism.²

The rites through which this turn of the person from the old life, dominated by the devil and sin, to the new one that belonged to Christ are usually described as scrutiny, exorcism, and the handing over of the creed (*traditio symboli*).³ These rites, including the catecheses the bishop delivered, must have left a deep and remaining impression on the candidates. We can suppose that they, together with the rites of the baptism, celebrated typically in the ancient Church on Easter night, defined the template of the Christian life of the baptised. This decisive pre-baptismal ‘conversion’ is well documented by six sermons of the Quodvultdean corpus that were preached on that occasion: three sermons *De symbolo I–III* (S1–3), two discourses *De accedentibus ad gratiam I–II* (A1–2), and *Contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arrianos* (CIPA).

Historians of liturgy have valued these sermons because they could provide a unique glimpse into the ancient pre-baptismal rites, but it would be a pity

1 Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, 6.

2 S3 I. 1; A1 I. 6–9; 2. 3 (CCL 60: 349, 441 f.); Ferguson, 772.

3 Pre-baptismal rites during Quodvultdeus’s time in Carthage are examined by Finn 1997, ‘Quodvultdeus’, 44 f.; lb., ‘It Happened’, 594–611; Kelly, *Devil*, 106–122; Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, 4–8; Van Slyke, ‘Devil’; Id., ‘Breathing’; Ferguson, 771–775; Pignot, ‘Catechumenate’, 181–212. For the scrutinies in Late Antiquity and in general, see also Albert Dondeyne, ‘La discipline des scrutins dans l’église latine avant Charlemagne’, *RHE* 26 (1932), 5–33, 751–787; Michel Dujarier, ‘Devenir disciple du Christ. Catéchuménat et «discipulat»’, in *Historiam perscrutari. Miscellanea di studi offerti al prof. Ottorino Pasquato*, ed. M. Maritano and O. Pasquato (Roma: LAS, 2002), 521–537; Serra, 511–527; P.M. Mann ‘How Rituals Form and Transform: The Scrutiny Rite from Medieval to Modern Times.’ Ph.D. thesis (The Catholic University of America, 2011).

to overlook the much deeper theological understanding of the baptismal conversion they provide. When examining the six catecheses, I would like to step aside from the field of history of the liturgy, although the liturgical aspects of the sermons cannot be altogether neglected. The reason for this lies in the fact that the author and the preacher himself did not intend to give witness to the liturgical practice of his Church, but he had a much more specific and explicit goal that he pursued in his sermons: to introduce his particular audience of the *competentes* and baptised Christians of Carthage to the meaning of what it means to decide wholeheartedly for the new life in Christ that would be opened to them in baptism. The sermons have to be read in their original setting and be perceived as mystagogical catecheses that aim to bring the bishop's audience to a more profound significance of the baptismal change in the lives of the believers.

A similar moment in the baptismal preparation could be encountered in Augustine's Hippo (s. 215 and 216 come closest) and also in other ecclesiastical regions of those times.⁴ Although Quodvultdeus's sermons provide a vivid and more complete picture of the moment, the gap left by the bishop of Hippo and other Church Fathers should not be quickly filled by the Quodvultdean corpus to provide a coherent and harmonising look at the African catechumenate. Instead, the sermons of Quodvultdeus should be treated as a self-contained witness to the practice of the Church in Africa, most probably in Carthage, that could have varied, more or less slightly, in different episcopal sees.⁵ Although it would be tempting to read Quodvultdeus's catechetical sermons through the lens of the catechumenate in Augustine's Hippo, a closer reading of these sermons discloses that the sequence of the rites documented by these sermons might have been different.

There cannot be doubt about the importance Quodvultdeus put into this moment of conversion expressed ritually during this night. The length of the sermons also illustrates it. The shortest of them, s2 and s3, contain about 4,500 words and it can be estimated that it would take nearly an hour to deliver each of them. The rest of the sermons, A1–2, s1, and C1PA, have between about 7,000 and 8,000 words and the preacher would need about an hour and a half to proclaim them to the audience.⁶ It can also be imagined that the final text of the sermons has not preserved the dialogical parts of the discourse: it was not uncommon for the African audience to express their assent, disagreement,

⁴ See pp. 118–121 above.

⁵ Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 182.

⁶ Ibidem, 188 for the length of the sermons.

enthusiasm, etc. to the preacher with shouts or clapping.⁷ The candidates of the baptism could have been helped, with the aid of the assembly, to learn the verses of the creed by their repetition that might have occurred during the catechesis itself. In that case, the bishop's instruction on the rites of scrutinies and the creed could have taken even longer.

1 Scrutiny and Handing over of the Creed

All six sermons describe the same rite of renunciation of the devil and adhesion to faith in God, as expressed in the creed of Carthage. A complete picture of the setting of the celebration is provided at the beginning of s1 which allows us to have a basic idea of what happened:

From a secluded room, you were each brought before the entire church. There, with your head—once proudly upright and malign—bowed, you were standing barefoot on goatskin and the scrutiny was celebrated among you. In this way, the proud devil was rooted out of you, while the humble Christ, Most High, was invoked over you. And so all of you were humble and you were pleading humbly with prayer, chanting psalms, and saying: *Examine me, Lord, and know my heart* (Psalm 138:3).⁸

From an adjacent room, the *competentes* were brought at the beginning of the night in front of the assembled congregation: the text leaves no doubt that the service was packed with other believers, most of whom having already undergone this procedure. The same moment is described in A1: 'You learn with what humility, necks subdued to a light burden, as a conquered beast of burden, you proceeded to the public, and in the sight of all, refuting the proud devil, you accepted the Lord Jesus as a humble inhabitant.'⁹ The scrutiny or examination (*examen*) was celebrated while the *competentes* showed their humble

⁷ Aug. ep. 213 (CSEL 57: 372–379).

⁸ S1 1. 5–6 (CCL 60: 305): *Vt ex locis secretis singuli produceremini in conspectu totius ecclesiae, ibique ceruice humiliata quae male fuerat antea exaltata, in humilitate pedum cilicio substrato in uobis celebraretur examen, atque ex uobis extirparetur diabolus superbus, dum super uos inuocatus est humilis altissimus Christus. Omnes itaque humiles eratis, humiliterque petebatis, orando, psallendo atque dicendo: 'proba me, domine, et scito cor meum'.*

⁹ A1 2. 2 (CCL 60: 442): *Discitis qua humilitate colla subdita iugo leui tamquam iumentum edomitum processeritis ad publicum, et in conspectu omnium confutantes superbum diabolum, humilem sessorem susceperitis dominum Christum.*

attitude standing on the goatskin with their heads bowed down. These elements describe the outward signs of the inner disposition of the candidates prepared to renounce the devil and welcome a new master in their lives. As a part of the scrutiny, there was the exorcism or the 'uprooting' of the devil, which was achieved through the invocation of Christ. The exorcism has these two elements and its primary scope was to replace the old 'master', the devil, with the new one, 'the humble Christ', who is the primary agent of the scrutiny, as it is him who is invoked and to whom the words of Psalm 138 were addressed:

He has probed, he has examined, he has touched the hearts of his servants with the fear of him. By his power he has made the devil run away and he has freed his family from the devil's dominion ... And so after the purified family of the Redeemer had sung the song of salvation, it received the antidote of the creed against the venom of the serpent, in order that if the adversary, the devil, wanted to plot again, the redeemed one would know how to stand firm against him with the sacrament of the creed and the banner of the creed.¹⁰

The first phrase of the passage presents Christ again as the agent of the scrutiny (*examen*), and the next one puts him as someone who 'made the devil run away' and 'freed his family from his dominion' in the exorcism. After the scrutiny, there comes a second rite (*sacramentum*): that of receiving the creed, the *traditio symboli* itself. The question of when these two rites were enacted during the night the vigil took place remains open.

T.M. Finn proposed that the creed was handed over (the *traditio symboli*) to the *competentes* on the Saturday two weeks before Easter, that is, one week before the night vigil described in S1. The *baptizandi* dedicated the following week to memorising the creed, being helped by their friends, sponsors, and other believers so that they would be able to profess it solemnly the following Saturday night (the *redditio symboli*). This night, one week before Easter, would be the prayer and exorcism vigil. The scrutiny, exorcisms, renunciation of the devil, and profession of the faith (*redditio symboli*) would make up part of this great night vigil. On the Sunday morning, one week before Easter,

10 S1 l. 7, 9 (CCL 60: 305f.): *Probavit, examinavit, corda seruorum suorum suo timore tetigit; diabolum sua uirtute fugauit, atque ab eius dominio suam familiam liberauit ... Purgata itaque familia redemptoris, posteaquam cantauit canticum salutis, accepit symboli remedium contra serpentis uenenum: ut si quando uoluerit aduersarius diabolus denuo insidiari, nouerit redemptus cum symboli sacramento et crucis uexillo ei debere occurri.*

the bishop would explain the rites that 'were enacted the previous night' and which are preserved in the form of the six sermons.¹¹

The reservation towards Finn's colourful depiction of the sequence of the rites comes from the fact that he conjectures their arrangement and timing from what we know about Lenten preparation in Augustine's Hippo.¹² Quodvultdeus's catecheses, in fact, do not specify when this night took place and we do not even find the terms *traditio* or *redditio symboli* in them. The sermons do not allow us to go beyond M. Pignot's affirmation that the six catecheses were delivered as an explanation 'some time after the ritual session'.¹³ I also agree with M. Pignot that no evidence can corroborate Finn's hypothesis and that it is not possible to read Augustine's testimony into Quodvultdeus's sermons. While it is true that S1–3, A1–2, and C1PA 'broadly correspond' to the rites of the scrutiny and the *traditio* and *redditio symboli* that can be found in Augustine as two separate rites that took place in a span of a week to make sure the competents learn the wording of the creed, Quodvultdeus's sermons show no sign of such a two-step process.¹⁴

The opening word of S1 initiates the question of the sequence of the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli*. S1 speaks about the rites (supposedly the scrutiny) enacted 'last night' (*transactae noctis*) and 'the holy creed now' (*praesentis sancti symboli*).¹⁵ T.M. Finn supposes that both the scrutiny and the *redditio symboli* were celebrated during the Saturday vigil and Sunday liturgy, and then came the exposition of the creed in S1.¹⁶ The *competentes*, purified and having been received into the 'family of the Redeemer', had already 'accepted' (*accepit*) the creed. C1PA contains a very similar introduction to the mystagogical catechesis of the rites of the 'last night' (*noctis transactae*) and of 'such a great sacrament received this day' (*istius diei de tanto sacramento percepto*).¹⁷ Both the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli* had been already celebrated in S1 and C1PA. These two sermons could have been pronounced in the course of the same celebration of the *traditio symboli* and it is possible that the assembly that started the previous night had not yet been finished and would come to an end with the sermon Quodvultdeus would give. Also, S2 and S3 show that the addressees

11 Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, 5–8.

12 See pp. 118–121 above.

13 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 187.

14 The question of whether separate rites of *traditio* and *redditio symboli* existed according to Quodvultdeus's sermons will be approached later on pp. 164–168 below.

15 S1 l. 1 (CCL 60: 335).

16 Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, 92 n. 1. Nazzaro, 'La produzione omiletica', 41 and Id., 'Contro Giudei', 526 inserts S1 into the rites of the Easter Vigil.

17 C1PA l. 4–5 (CCL 60: 227).

had already received the creed,¹⁸ but still the bishop gave his explanation of the creed only afterwards. A1 similarly speaks about the ‘medicine of last night’s sacraments’ that the *baptizandi* ‘have tasted’.¹⁹ These sacraments involve both the scrutiny²⁰ and the sacrament of the creed, which is described, similarly to S1, as ‘an antidote against the venom of the serpent—the devil’ as S1 uses about the sacrament of the creed.²¹

In S1–3, the appeal to renounce the devil, his pomps, and sin was present, although the audience had already renounced them.²² This does not imply that another renunciation or scrutiny took place after these sermons and the rites they comment upon, but it rather points to the fact that such a renunciation is a continuing process which does not end with the exorcism or the baptism but that the ‘soldiers of Christ’ are called to continue in this renunciation in their daily struggle.²³

To the rites celebrated on the ‘great’ night vigil in Carthage, I will dedicate the following pages.

1.1 *The Scrutiny: Rooting out the Devil*

The *examen* or the scrutiny is first of the rites and it comprises of several actions or movements. It seems, though, that it was not the only time the *competentes* were subjected to scrutiny and exorcism.²⁴ The period of intense preparation for baptism, most often coinciding with Lent, probably contained more than one vigil with exorcisms, chants, and prayers.²⁵ Taking S1 as an argument, J. Quasten suggested only one exorcism before baptism, but a parallel example of the exorcism on goatskins at the beginning of Lent and at the Easter Vigil in Theodore of Mopsuestia makes, in fact, the repetition of pre-baptismal exorcisms possible, as does *Apostolic Tradition*.²⁶ The same sermon S1—and also C1PA—suggests that the last of these several vigils was different in some aspects. First of all there would be the public nature, as other baptised believers visited the night vigil and the basilica was packed with people.²⁷ Second,

18 S2 1. 1; S3 1. 4 (CCL 60: 335, 349).

19 A1 1. 10 (CCL 60: 441): *sacramentorum eius transactae noctis gustasti aliquam medicinam*.

20 A1 2. 2 (CCL 60: 442).

21 A1 2. 1 (CCL 60: 442): *antidotum contra diaboli serpentis uelenum*.

22 S1 1. 11; 2–3; S2 1. 3; S3 1. 11 (CCL 60: 306–312, 335, 350).

23 S1 1. 13 (CCL 60: 306).

24 See p. 116 above.

25 S3 1. 1 (CCL 60: 349).

26 Quasten, ‘Theodore of Mopsuestia’, 211, 213; Id., ‘Ein Taufexorzismus bei Augustinus’, REA 2 (1956), 103; TA 20. 2 (ed. Bradshaw 104).

27 S3 1. 3 (CCL 60: 349); Saxer, *Rites*, 407.

similar to what the Sahidic version of *Apostolic Tradition* suggests, at the final exorcism, the bishop exorcised each one of the candidates and each of them was subject to a probe: analogically, it might be hypothesised that the previous exorcisms were performed with the whole group of the *competentes*, and at the scrutiny each of them was examined and exorcised individually.²⁸ Third, the public renunciation of the devil and evil took place and, in fact, the night vigil provided an opportunity for the final decision of the candidates to renounce the devil and accept Christ, which draws to it a particular attention.²⁹ The bishop, the congregation, and perhaps also the *competentes* knew that this was the last chance before their baptism to be rid of the devil and reject their allegiance to him. In other words, it was 'now or never' and the intensity of the rites might have corresponded to this desire to be liberated from evil and accept Christ. This is perhaps the reason why the liturgical celebration of these rites could have been prolonged throughout the whole night and perhaps only culminate with the dawn.³⁰

The standing on the goatskin is in various liturgical traditions associated with the scrutiny, with the examination of the bodies of the *baptizandi*.³¹ The intense liturgical assembly with its rites and the singing of psalms and possibly other hymns or biblical texts but especially the knowledge of the coming Lord's judgment were supposed to help in the process of the Lord's touching of the hearts, intentions, and inner dispositions of the candidates which would also cause the devil to flee from their lives, so that they might be liberated and freely join the 'family' of Christ, that is, the Church.

It is evident that the scrutinies and exorcisms must have been humiliating. It seems that the social status or being rich of a candidate was not a reason to dispense him from such a treatment:

Here the poor are not treated one way, the rich another, the master one way, the slave another, for *there is one entrance for all into life* (Wisdom 7:6); and if it is so in this fragile and mortal life, how much the better will it be for that immortal and everlasting life?³²

28 TA 20. 3–4 (ed. Bradshaw 104).

29 Saxer, *Rites*, 408.

30 AI 2. 3 (CCL 60: 442); perhaps also CIPA 1. 4 (CCL 60: 227); Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 193.

31 See p. 118 above.

32 SI 1. 8 (CCL 60: 305; tr. Finn 24; adapted): *Non aliter hic actus est pauper, aliter diues, aliter dominus, aliter seruus: quia 'unus est omnibus ad uitam introitus'; et si sic ad hanc fragilem atque caducam, quanto magis ad illam immortalem atque sempiternam?*

The society of the Church, this 'purified family of the Redeemer'³³ of brothers and sisters in Christ is visible already here, before the baptism, and it is an image of the future Church in heaven. One of the purposes of the rites is to integrate the candidates into this society of the new people of God and make them, in fact, members of Christ. There was no other way to become Christian, to die to sin and evil and be reborn at baptism than through undergoing these rites as well.³⁴ Quodvultdeus recalls again the unicity of the access to everlasting life in God, which could have been one of the most urgent motivations to be baptised, especially in the troubled and unstable times of the 430s in North Africa.

Another sermon on the creed, s3, lists *insufflationes* among the rites of the scrutiny, speaking about 'exorcism, prayers, spiritual songs, insufflations, the goatskin, bowed necks, bare feet'.³⁵ As Quodvultdeus designates Christ as the primary agent of the scrutiny, I suggest that the *insufflationes* correspond to the 'invocation of Christ' that accompanied all the rites of the scrutiny from the examination of the bodies standing on goatskins to the exorcisms and renouncing of the devil.

Generally, these *insufflationes* have been understood as a parallel to Augustine's *exsufflatio* exorcist rite with apotropaic function to expel the demon present in the believer. However, D. Van Slyke claimed that the *exsufflationes* and *insufflationes* are not the same rite: the insufflation would rather be a 'breathing gesture' symbolising 'a dramatic divine blessing, closely associated with the Holy Spirit'.³⁶ All the other uses of *insufflare* in Quodvultdeus's works, in fact, bear the same meaning of bestowing the Spirit,³⁷ where the opposite, the verb *exsufflare* in Quodvultdeus's works, refers to the practice of the Arians to exorcise and rebaptise the already baptised Catholic believers.³⁸ Quodvultdeus never uses *exsufflare* in his description of the pre-baptismal rites. However, since Augustine used the *exsufflatio*, practised even with small children, as an argument for his doctrine on the original sin,³⁹ I am convinced that this practice to exorcise with *exsufflationes* was widespread in Africa, or Augustine's theological argumentation—which would be later classified as a *lex orandi*—*lex credendi* argument—would not generally be accepted as valid. Therefore, it

33 S11.9 (CCL 60: 305): *purgata familia Redemptoris*.

34 Saxer, *Rites*, 408.

35 S31.3 (CCL 60: 349; tr. Finn 67).

36 Van Slyke, 'Breathing', 315.

37 S19.2; C5.36; L11.1.3; 2.30.65; 2.31.67 (CCL 60: 326, 417, 13, 132, 134).

38 S113.6; S313.4; CIPA 19.6; AQH 7.42; L D. 8.16 (CCL 60: 334, 363, 255, 299, 201).

39 See p. 120 above.

can be supposed that this rite was also practised in other churches of North Africa and, given the importance of the metropolitan See, also in Carthage. However, this 'hissing' or *exsufflatio* was an apotropaic rite that belonged to exorcism and since Quodvultdeus mentions *exorcismi* already earlier in the s3 list of the rites, he does not need to add the gesture of *exsufflatio* to this list.

As the *insufflationes* in s3 1. 3 describe a means to celebrate the sacraments (or rites; *sacramenta*) of the night vigil, it appears that it was a gesture or ritual action to support the whole rite. D. Van Slyke proposed that the *insufflationes* describe exhaling on the *competens* or 'the font or baptismal waters rather than the catechumen'.⁴⁰ Because the separation of a benediction of the baptismal font from the baptismal rites themselves does not seem justified and because it is also difficult to imagine such a blessing to take place in a relatively small site of a baptistery that would be possibly adjacent to the nave of the basilica, I opt to see the *insufflationes* as breathing upon the exorcised candidates themselves. Moreover, the list in s3 1. 3 contains ritual gestures that involve directly the *baptizandi* and this also supports the view that the *insufflationes* would involve precisely them.

In addition, D. Van Slyke argues that the aim of the exorcism was to 'cast out the worst of usurpers' (*pessimus inuasor*), that is, the devil, in order that the *competens* can welcome 'the best of masters' (*optimus possessor*) whom he identifies with the Holy Spirit, who 'took up residence therein through the ritual gesture of *insufflatio*'.⁴¹ I partly concur with this solution. I agree that the *insufflationes* describe, in fact, the invocation of the *optimus possessor* over the *competentes*. I suggest the above-quoted text of s1 designates the *insufflationes* as follows: 'the humble Christ, Most High, was invoked over you'.⁴² Although Quodvultdeus does not explicitly say who the 'best of masters' is, this text and also the fact that the meaning of the vigil's rites was the change of allegiance and change of inheritance from that of the devil to that of Christ who was also the primary agent of the scrutiny, moreover, A1 designates the 'Lord Jesus' as the *humilis sessor*, 'the humble inhabitant' or 'resident'.⁴³ I conclude that Quodvultdeus does not speak about the bestowing of the Spirit but rather about the invocation of Christ over the candidates. These *insufflationes* would not be another rite to be celebrated during the scrutiny, but instead it describes invocations of Christ that accompanied all the rites from the examination to the

40 Van Slyke, 'Breathing', 317–319, 326 f.

41 Ibid., 327; s2 2. 1; s3 1. 9 (CCL 60: 335, 350).

42 s1 1. 5 (CCL 60: 305).

43 A1 2. 2 (CCL 60: 442).

exorcism and renunciation of Christ, as other prayers, spiritual songs, penitential symbols such as the goatskins, etc., did.⁴⁴

Another procedure the *competentes* had to undergo, was the examination. It is probable that this examination of the bodies targeted at deciding whether the *competentes* display any physical symptoms of possible demonic possession, and perhaps also venereal or dermal disease, such as leprosy.⁴⁵ Such a condition would have been seen as problematic also for hygienic reasons, as the neophytes were expected to descend into the same font. The standing on the goatskin is also attested in other liturgical traditions and in Augustine, and for Quodvultdeus the goatskin bears a penitential meaning.⁴⁶ We do not know anything about examining the moral lives of the candidates, but the humble stance on the goatskin might have involved questioning their sinful attitudes that they were to abandon.

However, the candidates still belonged to the sphere of the demonic forces, they were held slaves of their spiritual realm, they wore 'devil's rags' as a sign of the diabolic inheritance, and it was necessary to 'expel the diabolic darkness from the hearts' of the *competentes*.⁴⁷ During this exorcism, the bishop invoked the name of Christ upon the lives of single *competentes* and used various means to have the person rid of diabolic possession. Prayers, invocations, perhaps using biblical verses, and even contemptuous gestures such as *exsufflatio* or hissing, similar to what we encountered in Augustine, were used to force the devil to exit the person's life.

The demonic possession was considered to ban the possessed person from using his or her freedom, as they were kept by the Slave-Holder, the devil. The exorcism, therefore, climaxed with a personal decision to renounce the devil, his pomps, and his angels, and to perfect, in this way, the 'exodus' from the realm of the devil. The renunciation of the devil, his pomps, and angels is well described in A1: 'Together, with one heart and one voice you answered to the person that asked you: "I renounce!"'⁴⁸ Quodvultdeus takes much time to let the *competentes* that 'have given their name' for baptism understand that it was each of them who declared these words in the singular, and yet, they made this proclamation as part of the whole Church, as 'a single person formed out of many'.⁴⁹ The bishop uses here Augustine's idea of Church based on Acts 4:32

44 S3 1. 3 (CCL 60: 349).

45 Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, 7.

46 L 2. 5. 8 (CCL 60: 78).

47 CIPA 3. 1; 1. 8 (CCL 60: 228f.).

48 A1 2. 4 (CCL 60: 442): *Simul enim uno corde et una uoce tradenti respondistis: renuntio.*

49 A1 2. 5 (CCL 60: 442).

which forms 'one heart and one soul (directed) toward God and in God' and employs it to make the whole assembly renew their renunciation of the devil with one 'I renounce' even during his sermon.⁵⁰

R.J. De Simone suggested a declaratory form of the renunciation: *Renuntio diabolo, pompis, et angelis eius*, 'I renounce the devil, his pomps, and angels.'⁵¹ The triad of the renounced realities is unquestionable, as it is constantly repeated throughout Quodvultdeus's sermons⁵² and it is witnessed both in Augustine's works and in the ancient African tradition.⁵³ Based upon the above-mentioned account of the renunciation in A1, V. Saxer proposes a dialogical form of the rite instead. He suggests two possible patterns of the dialogue: either there was only one question and one response of the *competentes*—*Renuntiatis diabolo, pompis, et angelis eius? Renuntio*—or three questions and threefold declaration, analogically to the baptismal dialogue of the profession of the faith: *Renuntiatis diabolo? Renuntio.*—(*Renuntiatis*) *pompis (diaboli)? Renuntio.*—(*Renuntiatis*) *et angelis eius? Renuntio.*⁵⁴ Given Quodvultdeus's emphasis on the explanation that the *competentes* declare their renunciation in the singular, by one voice of the Church they already form.⁵⁵ I regard the dialogical form with the resolute answer 'I renounce!' as much more plausible. The number of instances where Quodvultdeus enumerates the triad of 'the devil, his pomps, and angels' could point towards the possibility that it is an allusion to the actual wording of the formula of renunciation that would mirror the baptismal renunciation and that would make the one-sentence dialogical form probable.⁵⁶

50 A1 3. 1 (CCL 60: 442): *Si ergo haec omnis sancta congregatio unum cor et unicam animam habet a deo et in deum, simul omnes una uoce dicamus: renuntio.* For Augustine's theology of *cor unum et anima una*, see James McEvoy, 'Anima una et cor unum. Friendship and Spiritual Unity in Augustine', *RTAM* 53 (1986), 40–92; Yves Meessen 'Cor unum et anima una. L'Église en chemin vers la communion trinitaire', in *Les Pères et la naissance de l'ecclésiologie*, ed. M.-A. Vannier (Paris: Cerf, 2009), 183–196.

51 De Simone, 273.

52 CIPA 1. 11; 3. 1, 8; S1 1. 11; S2 1. 3; A1 4. 13; QVC 8. 1; L 1. 36. 52 (CCL 60: 228–230, 306, 335, 444, 373, 61).

53 See p. 120 above.

54 Saxer, *Rites*, 409.

55 A1 2. 5 (CCL 60: 442).

56 Boismard, 107–112 hypothesised that the formula of the renunciation might have its origin in a Hebrew or Aramaic form of the baptismal liturgy. Kelly, *Devil*, 95f., however, places the origin of this formula to the practices of the gnostics. As we find the set of words already at the beginning of the third century in Tert. *spect.* 4. 1–3; *an.* 35. 2; *cor.* 3. 2 (CCL 1: 231; 2: 837, 1042), who remained throughout his life apparently anti-Gnostic and would react in a hostile way to such usage, I find the latter possibility not really probable. The words

Much more important than the exact wording of the formula of renunciation is the meaning of the 'the devil, his pomps, and angels'.⁵⁷ Quodvultdeus dedicates to this question a large portion of the first parts of his catecheses on the creed. This explanation was not addressed solely to those who renounced the devil, his pomps, and angels the previous night but also to all the present baptised Christians and even to the consecrated persons.⁵⁸ The renunciation was not conceived only as a one-time event, as it was not the confession of the faith: all of the Christian life is for Quodvultdeus a struggle that involves the decision to 'renounce everything and to believe in the almighty God'.⁵⁹

For Quodvultdeus, the devil, his pomps, and angels represent the 'destructive inheritance' of sin⁶⁰ that the *competentes* renounced while standing on the goatskin: they reject it by not wanting to belong anymore to the world.⁶¹ The perspective of getting rid of this 'inheritance', represented by the 'devil's rags' goes beyond the present world, as those who would stick to it would be found to be debtors at the coming of the Judge.⁶² A necessary part of the renunciation of the 'destructive inheritance' is the moral struggle to put away the 'works of the darkness': 'What does it mean to lay aside the works of the darkness, if not to renounce the devil, his pomps, and angels?'⁶³ As the illicit desires concerning the Augustinian triad of the desires of the flesh, of the eyes, and worldly ambitions tempt and dishonour the soul, rejecting them means exactly to renounce the devil's pomps.⁶⁴ In practical words, this would mean for the *competens*, and later for the baptised, to make good use of different organs or members of the body, that is, of the eyes, of the tongue, of the ears, etc., and in this way to bring glory to the Creator.⁶⁵ Quodvultdeus does not want to leave space for a double

became fixed very soon and we find them in an unchanged form not only in Cyprian, but also in Optatus, Augustine, and finally Quodvultdeus: Cypr. *hab. virg.* 7; *dom. orat.* 19; *laps.* 8; *ad Fort.* 7; *b. pat.* 12; *ep.* 13. 5; *mort.* 26 (CSEL 3/1: 192, 281, 242, 328, 406, 508, 313); Ps.-Cypr. *aleat.* 9 (CSEL 3/3: 102); Opt. *s. in natali s. innocentium* 12 (PLS 1: 294); Aug. *s.* 251. 1 (PL 38: 1072).

57 The meaning of the word in Tertullian was studied by Jan Hendrik Waszink, 'Pompa diaboli', *VigChr* 1 (1947), 13–41.

58 A1 6. 6 (CCL 60: 445).

59 A1 7. 9 (CCL 60: 446): *in isto certamine renuntiare se in omnibus, et credere omnipotenti deo.*

60 CIPA 3. 8 (CCL 60: 230): *damnosa haereditas.*

61 S3 1. 21 (CCL 60: 350).

62 CIPA 3. 1 (CCL 60: 229).

63 CIPA 1. 11 (CCL 60: 228): *Quid est deponere opera tenebrarum, nisi renuntiare diabolo, pompis et angelis eius?* See also CIPA 2. 1 (CCL 60: 228).

64 S2 1. 4 (CCL 60: 335).

65 A1 4. 13 (CCL 60: 444).

life⁶⁶—he asks: ‘Why do you limp along as if you had a pair of swollen testicles?’⁶⁷—and affirms that there is no ‘grey zone’ between the realm of God and that of the devil: and God does not count among his own those who desert ‘his ways’.⁶⁸ That’s why he appeals to his audience to ‘go out of one’s country’ and follow Abraham’s steps into the Father’s home.⁶⁹ Still, in this effort, he affirms that in front of so many enemies, pomps, and angels, the human soul is weak and needs help from ‘divine mercy’:⁷⁰ this shows him to be a follower of Augustine’s doctrine on grace.

A special place among the devil’s pomps belonged to the spectacles, so beloved by the populace of Carthage, pagans and Christians alike, both part of a ‘civilisation based on the games’.⁷¹ The vivid picture and the strategy Quodvultdeus takes to incite in his audience the desire to leave the secular spectacles, incited by their ‘concupiscence of the flesh’⁷² behind is one of the strong arguments that indeed place these sermons to the city of Carthage.⁷³ Quodvultdeus blames the baptised Christians that they come to the Church, and a few minutes later they shout shameless words at the theatre.⁷⁴ In fact, he is convinced that the spectacles are the devil’s ‘rat-trap’⁷⁵ and that when someone frequents spectacles, he leaves the Church,⁷⁶ as the spectacles are so shameful that God averts his face from those who frequent them.⁷⁷ The insistence with which Quodvultdeus—and Augustine too—in their sermons appeal against the practice of the church-goers visiting the amphitheatre and gladiatorial games discloses the futility of their effort.⁷⁸

That is possibly the reason why Quodvultdeus’s accusation against the various types of spectacles does not take only a difficult path, but he presents the events of the salvation history, as well as the sacraments of the Church as true

66 S3 1. 13 (CCL 60: 350).

67 S3 1. 13–14 (CCL 60: 350; tr. Finn 68): *Vtquid claudicatis ambobus inguinibus?*

68 S3 1. 18 (CCL 60: 350).

69 QVC 8. 1 (CCL 60: 373).

70 A1 3. 2 (CCL 60: 442): *nisi subueniat clementia diuina*.

71 Roland Auguet, *Cruelty and Civilization: The Roman Games* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1972), 184.

72 S2 1. 5 (CCL 60: 335).

73 See p. 17 f. above.

74 S3 1. 13 (CCL 60: 350); see also TB1 1. 11; 3. 19 (CCL 60: 424, 427).

75 S1 1. 19 (CCL 60: 307): *muscipulam spectaculorum*. See also A1 3. 3 (CCL 60: 307).

76 C 2. 7; A1 5. 4 (CCL 60: 410, 444).

77 TB2 2. 6 (CCL 60: 474). For the spiritual danger of the spectacles see Van Slyke, ‘Devil’, 63.

78 Markus, *End of Ancient Christianity*, 123 notes that a very high proportion of Augustine’s sermons against the spectacles were preached in Carthage.

spectacles. Christ himself in his Passion and his struggle with the devil who tries to kill him is the very spectacle to set before the eyes of his audience.⁷⁹

Contrast our holy, healthy, and most agreeable spectacles ... If these pomps—the sight of horses, the construction of the chariots, as well as the livery of the charioteer as he stands, driving the horses and panting to win—if these pomps delight you, as I said, he who commands you to renounce the pomps of the devil does not deny them to you. For we ourselves also have our spiritual charioteer, the holy prophet Elijah, who, high astride the four-horse chariot of fire, drove it so fast that he scaled the boundaries of heaven.⁸⁰

Quodvultdeus plays on the Carthaginians' love for the spectacles and offers them an alternative way of life, presented in even more vivid colours than the theatrical pleasures of the city or the excitement of the chariot races in the circus. Against the wrestling in the amphitheatre—the emphasis itself on the shows could be already a strong argument of the Carthaginian origin of s1—he shows the struggles of the biblical narratives, for example, the fight between Esau and Jacob in Rebecca's womb.⁸¹ He alludes to the religious dimensions of the spectacles when he contrasts the immorality of the Roman gods Jupiter and Juno with the chastity of Christ and the Virgin Mary.⁸² But even in this, he is not a pioneering figure: already Tertullian had changed the desire for fighting and blood with a fascination for the blood of Christ.⁸³ Nevertheless, for the populace of Carthage, not only for the newcomers to the Church but also to those who had rejected genuine Christian behaviour and were frequenting the civic spectacles, the invitation of the bishop would be truly enticing:⁸⁴

79 S3 5. 12; L G. 13. 16 (CCL 60: 357, 222).

80 S1 2. 5–8 (CCL 60: 307f.; tr. Finn 25f.): *Vide contra nostra sancta, sana, suauissima spectacula ... Sed si te pompa illa, figurae equorum, compositio curruum, ornatus et aurigae superstantis, equos regentis, uincere cupientis; si haec te, ut dixi, pompa delectat, nec hanc tibi denegauit, qui pompis diaboli renuntiare praecepit. Habemus et nos spiritalem nostrum aurigam sanctum prophetam Heliam, qui quadrigae igneae superimpositus tantum cucurrit, ut metas prenderet caeli.*

81 S1 2. 18–21 (CCL 60: 309). There are strong similarities between the lists of biblical personages in S1 2 and L G. 13. 16 and 2. 35. 77 (CCL 60: 222, 144) that would strengthen the argumentation for the same authorship of L and the sermons.

82 S1 2. 12–13 (CCL 60: 308). In fact, the dramatic exposition of the champions of the faith set before the eyes of the population of Carthage, so obsessed with the spectacles, speaks for Quodvultdeus's authorship of s1: it would make much less sense to set the delivery of the sermon in any other city than Carthage.

83 Tert. *spect.* 29. 5 (CCL 1: 251f.); Van Slyke, 'Devil', 67.

84 S1 2. 24–25. 27 (CCL 60: 309f.).

Long for these spiritual shows, come eagerly to church to behold them and to watch in full security, summon your heart's attention back from every carnal desire, submit your every concern to God's rule. Then, should the adversary return, he will find nothing belonging to him in you, save that you repudiate him and renounce his pomps. And later, when your liberty has been snatched from his snares, let that abominable one, whom we know is also eager to capture those who are not his, find you empty.⁸⁵

The 'spiritual spectacles' and their contemplation becomes for Quodvultdeus a vehicle to change allegiances from the devil to Christ. The devil, in fact, also makes part of Quodvultdeus's exposition and his sermons on the creed contain passages dedicated to the question of 'What is the devil?'⁸⁶ The portrayal of the devil is not autotelic but serves Quodvultdeus also to urge his audience to turn down the heritage of 'shameful' rags that Adam received from the devil and renounce the world whose ruler is the devil and the devil himself.⁸⁷ Having been liberated from the devil's enslavement, the *competens* would be free to profess his faith in God and to become a servant of Christ.

1.2 *Receiving the Creed*

The expulsion of the devil, the desired fruit of the scrutiny and exorcism, prepares the hearts of the *competentes*—'the house has been cleaned', 'your enemy has been driven from' you—to receive the creed, so that the bishop 'may impress' in the understanding of the candidates 'the content' of each article of the creed.⁸⁸ When the devil, the usurper, has been expelled, the new master, Christ, is to be welcomed, as God is professed in the creed.⁸⁹ This new allegiance to Christ was expressed through the rite of the *traditio symboli*: the *competentes* 'accepted the words of the creed',⁹⁰ or 'the sacrament of the creed'

85 S1 2. 28 (CCL 60: 310; tr. Finn 27 f.): *Ista spiritalia munera concupiscite, ad haec intuenda et cum omni securitate spectanda alacriter ad ecclesiam conuenite, ab omni cupiditate carnali propositum cordis reuocate, omnem sollicitudinem uestram deo gubernandam committite: ut aduersarius reuereatur nihil in uobis inueniens suum; uosque illum repudiantes, eiusque pompis renuntiantes, posteaquam ab eius insidiis uestra fuerit eruta libertas, ne uos inueniat uacuos ille nefarius, quem nouimus etiam non suos tenere cupientem.*

86 CIPA 2. 1–2 (CCL 60: 228): *Quid sit diabolus?*

87 CIPA 2. 6; S3 1. 10, 21; 5. 9 (CCL 60: 229, 350 f., 356). For Quodvultdeus's presentation of the devil, see p. 261–265 below.

88 S3 1. 7–8 (CCL 60: 349).

89 S2 2. 1 (CCL 60: 335).

90 CIPA 1. 11 (CCL 60: 228): *ex uerbis symboli quod modo accepistis.*

that they 'keep, having committed it to their memory'.⁹¹ Some sermons conceive the received creed as a medicine that would cure man from the spiritual illness the devil had brought upon him. This antidote to the serpent's venom is the creed.⁹² As in other ecclesiastical regions, the *electi* were expected to learn the text of the baptismal creed by heart: it was a 'sacrament' to keep. Unquestionably, the *traditio symboli* existed in Quodvultdeus's Carthage, although the author never uses this expression.

Both rites, the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli*, were joined intrinsically together, and at least on one occasion this solemn declaration of the candidates' new allegiance seems to have taken place at dawn, after the vigil filled with prayers, scrutinies, and exorcisms.⁹³ In fact, as I have already hinted, it is not altogether clear whether the *traditio symboli* was enacted immediately after the scrutiny, in the course of the same celebration, or if there were some time between the two occasions.⁹⁴

The question is its relationship to the scrutiny, and to the profession of faith, usually described as *redditio symboli*. Quodvultdeus does not seem to distinguish between the *traditio* and *redditio symboli* as independent rites and, as a matter of fact, we cannot be sure whether there existed both rites or only one in Carthage. In S3 4. 1, the bishop says to the audience: 'Such is what you have understood; such, you have said you believe in saying: "I believe."' ⁹⁵ Does Quodvultdeus refer to handing over the creed? The candidates would repeat the articles of faith after the bishop, or give their assent to them with their own declaration: *credo*. Or does this 'rite' refer to the *redditio symboli*, when the candidates came back, after some time, to declare their allegiance publicly to the creed professed by the Church of Carthage? Apart from analogies, especially from Augustine's works,⁹⁶ there are no other witnesses that could provide us with answers.

In either case, each of the candidates expressed at this rite his faith by a resolute 'I believe' (*credo*).⁹⁷ The text of the creed was recited, either in full, in its declaratory form, or in the dialogic form, where the *competentes* simply responded to the single propositions of the creed, as a passage from *Adversus quinque haereses* (AQH), addressed albeit rhetorically to an Arian opponent,

91 S2 1. 1 (CCL 60: 335): see p. 175 f. below.

92 S1 1. 9; S3 1. 4 (CCL 60: 305, 349).

93 A1 2. 3 (CCL 60: 442).

94 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 195 f.

95 S3 4. 1 (CCL 60: 354; tr. Finn 72): *Sic accepistis, sic uos credere dixistis: credo*.

96 See p. 122 above.

97 S3 4. 1 (CCL 60: 354).

might suggest.⁹⁸ Taking into account the character of the creed that was supposed to be held in the memory by the believers, it seems to make more sense if the candidates expressed their faith in full, similarly to Augustine's practice in *sermo* 215.⁹⁹

Quodvultdeus calls the creed *symbolum*,¹⁰⁰ in some places 'holy creed', *sanc-tum symbolum*,¹⁰¹ or even 'the most holy creed', *sacratissimum symbolum*.¹⁰² The bishop of Carthage follows the step of an ancient African tradition; already Tertullian had described the creed as *symbolum*.¹⁰³ However, unlike Rufinus or Ambrose, he neither narrates the legendary apostolic origin of the creed,¹⁰⁴ nor explains the meaning of this word. Where Rufinus explains that the Apostolic Creed can be used as a kind of password to prove one's identity and forbids, like Ambrose or Augustine, writing the text of the creed down,¹⁰⁵ Quodvultdeus mentions only once that the creed is kept in the memory¹⁰⁶ and the process of repetition and memorising the text of the creed, together with a proclamation of faith by the *competentes*, might have been the content of the rite.

Still, Quodvultdeus calls the creed or the *traditio symboli* 'a sacrament' or 'the sacrament of the creed' (*sacramentum symboli*).¹⁰⁷ Together with the 'banner of Christ' they were to use it as a defence against the devil's weaponry.¹⁰⁸ As a 'sacrament', the creed was conceived in the Patristic age as something that somehow reveals God's acting with humanity in its various aspects and the creed, in this way, connected the *competens* with the mystery of Christ, as it had to do with his salvation, with his belonging to the Church whose faith it expressed and being in that which was understood as important for one's salvation.

As already mentioned, Quodvultdeus's sermons do not usually contain direct quotations from the articles of the creed, but his commentaries make allusions to the text of this brief summary of Christian faith. Various authors have tried to reconstruct the text of Quodvultdeus's creed, or the creed of

98 AQH 6. 7 (CCL 60: 280); Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 194.

99 Aug. s. 215. 1 (RB 68 [1958]: 18).

100 S1 1. 1, 5; 4. 12; S2 1. 1; S3 1. 4; CIPA 1. 11 (CCL 60: 305 f., 314, 335, 349, 228).

101 S1 9. 30; 12. 1; S3 12. 1 (CCL 60: 329, 332, 362).

102 S3 1. 7 (CCL 60: 349).

103 Tert. *adv. Marc.* 6. 1 (CCL 1: 664). Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 52 f.

104 Ruf. *ymb.* 2 (CCL 20: 134 f.).

105 Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 53 f.

106 S2 1. 1 (CCL 60: 335).

107 S1 1. 5; S2 1. 1 (CCL 60: 306, 335).

108 S1 1. 9, 13, 16 f. (CCL 60: 310).

Carthage.¹⁰⁹ The much shorter version of the creed of Carthage, based on Quodvultdeus's sermons, has been proposed by L. Westra, who offers the following text:

*Credo in deum patrem omnipotentem
(credo?) (et?) in filium eius Iesum Christum
natum de spiritu sancto ex uirgine Maria
crucifixum sub Pontio Pilato et sepultum
tertia die a mortuis resurrexit
assumptus in caelos
ad dexteram patris sedet
inde uenturus est (?) iudicare uiuos et mortuos
credo in spiritum sanctum
remissionem peccatorum
carnis resurrectionem
(et?) (in?) uitam aeternam
(per?) sanctam ecclesiam.*¹¹⁰

L. Westra admits that the allusive character of Quodvultdeus's references to the creed does not permit him to get the exact wording he was looking for in the greater context of his work.¹¹¹ I agree with Westra's reconstruction of the creed of Carthage which shares the typical characteristics of African creeds and does not contain the phrases that develop and make precise the doctrinal content of the articles as the previous research supposed: these additions are explained in Quodvultdeus's commentaries although it does not possibly make up part of the creed of Carthage itself.

While the six sermons on the creed share a very similar structure of the creedal catechesis, M. Pignot analysed their differences and the various focuses they take.¹¹² He finds that some sermons keep the linear structure of the commentary on single articles of the creed (s1; s2) but another is less systematic (s3) or quotes the creed only rarely (CIPA), while others are free, although they follow the broad structure of the creed (A1–2). Some of them give only a brief treatment of some articles¹¹³ or merely allude to them,¹¹⁴ and some skip some

109 Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 176; De Simone, 276; Saxer, *Rites*, 410 f.; Mbonigaba, 131.

110 Westra, *Creed*, 178.

111 Ibidem, 169.

112 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 204–209.

113 CIPA 18. 1–7 (CCL 60: 252 f.) dedicates little space to the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

114 s2 only alludes to Jesus being born of the Virgin Mary.

articles entirely.¹¹⁵ Some are shorter (s2; s3), some are lengthier (s1; CIPA; A1–2); the lengthier ones are also strongly polemical, especially against the Arians, but CIPA and A1 address also other religious groups. Nonetheless, all the sermons on the creed follow similar principles that were quite common and can be documented in the works of other Latin bishops of the fourth and fifth centuries, such as Ambrose, Rufinus, or Augustine. While the different theological emphasis of the single sermons can be observed in respective chapters, the anti-heretical aspect of the expositions on the creed will be treated separately in Chapter Seven.

To conclude, it can be stated that there existed a handing over of the creed to the *competentes* in Carthage after the scrutiny and before their baptism. But when this happened, if it was one or two weeks before the Easter, if it was enacted at the same night vigil as the scrutiny, if there existed a separate *redditio symboli*, we do not know. Nevertheless, this still permits us to grasp and understand the theology Quodvultdeus wanted to unfold to the candidates of baptism.

2 *De symbolo* I

Now, let us turn to the text of six of Quodvultdeus's sermons on the creed. The first group of these is constituted by three discourses entitled *De symbolo*. These are—apart from the *Liber*—the most studied works of the bishop of Carthage.¹¹⁶ The first of these sermons on the creed (s1; CPL 401) opens with a statement that reveals the intent the preacher has in performing his task to instruct the *competentes*:

We have taken up the task to explain and expound on and explain to Your Holiness the meaning of the sacraments, whether those enacted last night, or the holy creed now.¹¹⁷

G. Morin indicated that the addressees of s1 the 'neophytes (*sic*) were already conceived by the sign of the cross but not yet reborn from the baptism'.¹¹⁸ It can

115 s3 skips the articles on the Father and on the Passion and the Resurrection.

116 De Simone, 272–277; Nazzaro, 'La produzione omiletica', 41, and especially Finn, *Creedal Homilies*; recently also Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 181–221.

117 s11.1 (CCL 60: 305): *Sacramentorum rationem, siue transactae noctis, siue praesentis sancti symboli exponendam atque explanandam suscepimus sanctitati uestrae ...*

118 Morin, 'Pour une future édition', 156.

be specified that s1 was delivered in close proximity to the rites of the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli*. The preacher expresses his intention in his very first words. The explanation of the meaning (*ratio*) of the sacraments is a typical feature of a mystagogical catechesis, as we find it in many ancient writers and also in CIPA.¹¹⁹ Quodvultdeus refers to the practice of many ancient churches of introducing the neophytes to the mystery of the sacraments they had received through the mystagogical catechesis. Its meaning was to show the meaning of the rites—not their course, but to insert the sacrament in the history of salvation that started with the Old Testament, continued in the New Testament, and was still alive and active in the history of the Church and of all the faithful. The final aim was to show how the recipient of the sacraments is himself part of the history of salvation and that the same miracles he reads about in the Scriptures happen to him in a sacramental way.¹²⁰

A few lines below, Quodvultdeus starts the description of the two sacraments precisely with two questions about the significance of the rites celebrated in the course of the night: 'What is it, most beloved, that was celebrated around you? What is it that was done last night among you that was not done on previous nights?'¹²¹ A similar question addressed to the assembly could be found in the course of Ambrose's *De sacramentis* but also in other mystagogical writings of the fourth and fifth centuries.¹²² Moreover, its wording might be a reminder of the questions about the significance of the Passover night that make up part of the Haggadah and, given the antiquity of the Mishna where they appear, and could have been therefore a conscientious allusion to the Hebrew celebration of Passover, understood as a figure of the Christian understanding of Easter and baptism.¹²³ The exposition of Quodvultdeus's s1 is, therefore, a mystagogical one. The two rites s1 speaks about are the scrutiny and the creed¹²⁴ and both of these rites are related to the fundamental relationship between the candidate for baptism and Christ. It is possible that s1 was delivered at dawn, at the end of the night vigil when the two rites were celebrated.¹²⁵

119 Ambr. *myst.* 1. 1 (SAEMO 17: 136); CIPA 1. 4 (CCL 60: 227).

120 Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 75.

121 s11. 4 (CCL 60: 305; tr. Finn 23): *Quid est quod hac nocte circa uos actum est, quod praeteritis noctibus actum non est?*

122 Ambr. *sacr.* 2. 2. 3 (SAEMO 17: 60); Aug. s. 223B. 2; 223K. 1; 272. 1 (MA 1: 456, 718; PL 38: 1246).

123 Jerusalem Talmud, *Pesachim* 60b; Babylonian Talmud, *Pesachim* 116b.

124 s11. 5–6, 9 (CCL 60: 305 f.).

125 See p. 155–164 above.

According to T.M. Finn, 'Your Holiness' addressed in the exordium is 'almost certainly the bishop Capreolus', although 'it may be a formal salutation for the congregation'.¹²⁶ The former option would constitute an important indication that would permit us to date the sermon, given Quodvultdeus's authorship, to before his ascension to the see of Carthage, that is, before 434. Despite Finn's opinion, I consider the latter one, also witnessed in other pieces of the Quodvultdean corpus, such as S2 9. 12, as much more probable. The reason for this is the fact that in the same way it is used not only elsewhere in this sense in the Quodvultdean corpus¹²⁷ but it was also used by Quodvultdeus's friend and teacher Augustine, who repeatedly, in hundreds of cases, addresses his assembly with the *sanctitas* or *caritas uestra*.¹²⁸ What is even more important is that it would not make sense for the preacher to 'explain the meaning of the rites' to a bishop who would not need to be introduced to the significance of the creedal symbol. Moreover, all other mystagogical catecheses are delivered by the bishop whose primary task was to teach his people. Therefore, the addressee cannot be Capreolus, but rather the congregation and the preacher would already be a bishop. As there are not other clues present that would enable a more precise dating, this sets the date of the composition between 432/4–440.

The next sentence of the sermon links S1 to CN. Firstly, Quodvultdeus expresses his faith that the Lord would 'make your prayer on our behalf acceptable'.¹²⁹ Such a wish was not uncommon in contemporary preaching, but correspondence to this demand can be seen in the petition at the end of CN where the preacher asked the *competentes*, as a reward for the baptismal preparation, to pray for him at their baptism.¹³⁰ Secondly, the exhortation to 'pay heed, you who long for God's word through faith, as if seeking food from which God grants you growth'¹³¹ can be heard as an echo of the 'agreeable provisions for a journey' (*competentem sitarciam*) of the *competentes* towards their baptism and eternal life in CN.¹³² Although these witnesses are only internal, nevertheless they testify for the same authorship of CN and S1, as they draw from the

126 Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, 92 n. 1.

127 A1 1. 1; 2. 5; A2 1. 1, 3; QVC 1. 1; 2. 2, 7; 11. 2; CIPA 1. 2; 2. 1; 21. 1; S2 9. 4, 12; S3 3. 9; AQH 6. 4 (CCL 60: 441f., 459, 367f., 375, 227f., 256, 346, 353, 280).

128 For example, *Io. eu. tr.* 1. 1; 3. 18; 5. 20; 6. 1, 13; *en. Ps.* 23. 10; 25. 2. 5; 29. 1. 5; 33. 2. 7; *S. 7D* = 142 auct. 1; 22D = 341 auct. 23, 26, etc.

129 S1 1. 2 (CCL 60: 305): *acceptabilem pro nobis faciens orationem uestram*.

130 CN 10. 9–11 (CCL 60: 392).

131 S1 1. 2 (CCL 60: 305): *Accipite itaque uos qui fide desiderates uerbum dei, tamquam competentem cibum, ex quo uobis Dominus operetur incrementum*.

132 CN 2. 15 (CCL 60: 383); see also Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 191.

same theological concept of the immediate baptismal preparation of the *competentes* which shares Augustine's imagery of the catechumenate as the time in the womb of the Church.¹³³

The sermon focuses on the exposition of the creed and its structure could be described as follows:

1 *Exordium*

- 1. 4–8 The rite of the scrutiny
- 1. 9–10 The creed
- 1. 11–19 Appeal to renounce the devil
- 2 Spectacles of the world and spectacles of the Church

3 *Narratio*: The creed

- 3–4 'Believe in God Father almighty'
- 3 The omnipotence of the Father and the Son
- 4 Equality of the Father and the Son
- 5 'We believe in his Son Jesus Christ'
- 5 'Christ was born of the Virgin Mary'
- 6. 1–20 'Under Pontius Pilate, he was crucified, and was buried'
- 6. 21–28 'On the third day he rose again'
- 7 'He ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father'
- 8 'He will come to judge the living and the dead'
- 9 'We believe in the Holy Spirit'
- 10 'The forgiveness of sins'
- 11 'The resurrection of the body'
- 12 'The life everlasting'
- 13 'Holy Church'

After the exordium, Quodvultdeus recalls the rites of the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli* that were enacted during the night.¹³⁴ However, the bishop wants to point out the meaning, purpose, and effect of the scrutinies and that was that 'the proud devil was rooted out' of the *competentes*, 'while the humble Christ, the Most High, was invoked' over them.¹³⁵ These sacraments are weaponry of the 'soldiers of Christ' that equip them to stand fast against various attacks of

¹³³ S11.3 (CCL 60: 305).

¹³⁴ S11. 4–10 (CCL 60: 305 f.).

¹³⁵ S11. 5 (CCL 60: 305): *ex uobis extirparetur diabolus superbus, dum super uos inuocatus est humilis Christus.*

the enemy, who fights relying on 'pleasure and fear'.¹³⁶ Such a struggle is not a one-time thing, but rather a continuous effort, and the synthesis of the content of the Christian faith, expressed in the creed, should help them, for the 'names of those making the profession are inscribed in the book of life'.¹³⁷ Even this aim corresponds well with the intention of the *competentes* instruction expressed in CN.¹³⁸ In the scrutinies, the *competentes* have renounced the 'poms of the devil', which are represented by the 'spectacles'. Quodvultdeus warns the candidates against 'the devil's most wicked theatre seats' and the 'circus'.¹³⁹ This is where the bishop makes a surprising move and offers his audience even better 'spectacles': the mysteries celebrated in the Church.¹⁴⁰

After the admonition to engage in the spiritual struggle, repudiate the devil, and renounce his poms, Quodvultdeus¹⁴¹ moves to the presentation of the spiritual fighter's weaponry, that is, that of the creed. One after another, the bishop presents the lines of the baptismal symbol used in Carthage and delivers a commentary on each line. This way of explanation is very similar to a homily which discloses the meaning of Scripture verses, line after line. A similar procedure can also be found in other Church Fathers of the period, for example, in Ambrose's *Explanatio symboli*, or in Augustine's sermons on the creed.¹⁴²

Already in the explanation of the first article on the creed, s1 starts to speak against the Arian heresy, about the omnipotence and eternity of the Son and his equality with the Father.¹⁴³ This type of discourse related to the article of the creed had already become traditional since the beginning of the fourth century, to when the origins of the Arian heresy can be traced. Also, other preserved catenches on the creed contain polemics with the Arians.¹⁴⁴ In s1, however, the anti-Arian topics seem to pervade and even dominate the sermon, as it returns to the anti-Arian discourse when speaking of the Holy Spirit, and his exposition is very thorough and extensive.¹⁴⁵ The presence of this confrontation could not be taken alone as a proof of when and where the sermon was delivered. Never-

136 S1 1. 9–13, 16 (CCL 60: 306).

137 S1 1. 12 (CCL 60: 306): *nomina profitentium in libro excipiuntur uitae*.

138 See p. 37 above.

139 S1 2. 1, 3 (CCL 60: 307): *Fugite ... spectacula ... Quid delectat in circo aurigas uidere certantes*
...

140 S1 2. 5–8 (CCL 60: 307).

141 S1 2. 27–28 (CCL 60: 310).

142 For the text of the creed, see p. 167 above.

143 S1 3. 9 (CCL 60: 311).

144 Ambr. *expl. symb.* 4 (SAEMO 17: 30); Rufin. *expos. symb.* 4 (PL 21: 341–343).

145 S1 9. 6–29 (CCL 60: 327–329).

theless, this type of discussion would not be out of place for the city of Carthage in the 430s, but quite the opposite. However, the discourse culminates with the exposition of the last article on the creed dedicated to the Church, and here an explicit remark on Arians and their practices to attract Catholic Christians with favours and to rebaptise them can be found there:

Do not permit the worthless servant to abuse the mistress. Do not permit the Arian heretic to revile the church. He is a wolf, recognise it; he is a serpent, dash his head. He flatters, but deceives; he promises a lot, but defrauds. Come, he says, I will defend you; if you are in need, I will feed you; if naked, I will clothe you. I will give you money, I will arrange it in such a way that a person may receive something every day. O evil wolf! O wicked serpent! O wretched servant! You scorn your mistress, you assail your true mother; in rebaptising the Catholic, you foreswear Christ; and, what is the rock bottom of your craftiness, some you compel with force, in order to destroy them, on others you press money which results in their death. Heretic, are you not really clothing the naked, in order to strip from within one clothed with Christ? Are you not really feeding the hungry, in order to take away the heavenly food of the soul?¹⁴⁶

Because of the harm that the Arians inflicted on the Church and her believers, they are at the centre of Quodvultdeus's concerns in s1.¹⁴⁷ He accuses them of the exact opposite of what has been enacted on the *competentes* with the rites of the scrutinies: whereas there was the rite of *exsufflatio*, with which the devil was 'foresworn' and driven away, the Arian tactics to persuade Catholic believers to join them do the same with Christ. Bribery with money and position, as well as rebaptising already baptised Christians, was a Vandal practice under Geiseric, and Quodvultdeus seems to face this practice when preparing the *competentes* for their life as Catholic believers. Although there remains a question of how strong the influence of Vandal Arians was in the

146 S113, 4–6 (CCL 60: 334; tr. Finn 49): *Seruius malus non insultet dominae; haereticus arrianus non insultet ecclesiae. Lupus est, agnoscite: serpens est, eius capita conquassate. Blanditur, sed fallit: multa promittit, sed decipit. Venite, inquit, defendam: si necessitas est, pascam, si nuditas, uestiam: dabo pecuniam, statuam quid per singulos dies quisque accipiat. O lupe male! o serpens inique! o serue nequissime! dominam calcas, ueram matrem impugnas, Christum exsufflas, catholicum rebaptizas; et quod est pessimum artis tuae, alios potentia premis ut perdas, alios pecunia comparas quos occidas. Ergo ne, haeretice, ad hoc uestis nudum, ut exspolies intus Christo uestitum? Ad hoc pascis esurientem, ut animae auferas cibum caelestem?*

147 Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, III n. 85.

territory still governed by the Romans, I suggest that this remark would set a date for the composition of S1 to the late 430s, that is, between 435 and 440.

And again, Quodvultdeus builds upon the Augustinian image of the catechumenate as the time in the womb of the Mother Church. He reminds his candidates for baptism of the beauty of the Church and urges them to defend their mother against the attacks of the heretics, especially Arians, as we have seen:

Holy church, in whom the entire authority of this mystery has its boundaries—mother and virgin, chaste in body, fruitful in offspring, declared earlier to be bride of Christ. With devotion she nourishes her children, whom she strives zealously to signify as worthy of God the Father. Good children, love such a marvellous mother! ... Do not allow her to suffer or to be weakened from the insults and plots of either evil children or worthless servants.¹⁴⁸

As I will point out, Quodvultdeus's stance is not merely anti-heretical: it instead remains in function of the protection of the Catholic Church and her children, that is, the Christian believers. The audience of S1 found themselves just at the beginning of their journey as parts of Christ's body, the Church. Their baptismal identity has just started being built, and the bishop seeks to strengthen their Christian integrity. In this endeavour, he appears to be consistent also in his other sermons on the creed.

3 *De symbolo* II

As in the case of the previous sermon, the sermon *De symbolo* II (S2; CPL 402) opens with a sentence that reveals the main topic of the catechesis. In this case, it is with an abrupt appeal, as it starts:

You have come to know the sacrament of the creed, which you have received and keep, having committed it to your memory for your salva-

¹⁴⁸ S1 13. 1–3 (CCL 60: 333f.; tr. Finn 49): *Sancta ecclesia, in qua omnis huius sacramenti terminatur auctoritas, mater et uirgo, corpore casta, prole fecunda, sponsa Christi superius declarata, pie nutrit filios quos deo patri dignos assignare contendit. Filii boni, amate tantam matrem ... Non eam patiamini aut filiorum malorum, aut pessimorum seruorum iniuriis atque insidiis macerari.*

tion, as the fundament of the Catholic faith, upon which the building of the Church, erected by the hands of the apostles and the prophets has risen.¹⁴⁹

The incipit shows the 'sacrament' of the creed that is intrinsically related to the salvation of the hearers. The apostolicity (or the apostolic origin) of the creed, as well as of the Church is declared and it is shown as a basis for the Catholic Church and her faith. Without the Catholic faith expressed in the creed, it is impossible to enter the Catholic Church. The apostolicity of both, then, is an argument against the communities that pretend to share the same apostolicity. The *traditio symboli* had already taken place but there are no clues about the occasion when this sermon was delivered.

Even for the date of the sermon, there are no references to difficult times in this sermon, except for the theological polemics with the Arians and the apostrophe directed to Herod that might have been understood as a reference to current events, as shall be shown. This can be explained at least in two ways. First, we should not expect that every sermon or catechesis refers to the historical events. The occasion, that is, the rites of the scrutinies and handing over of the creed, does not force the preacher to allude to what is going on in the society at that time. His aim is different: to shift the allegiance of the soon-to-be-baptised audience from that of the world, dominated by the devil and his powers, to that of Christ and the eternal homeland. It cannot, therefore, be assumed too readily that the absence of such references means that the catechesis was delivered in a time of peace: and that would be the second option. If all six sermons on the scrutinies and the creed are of the same author, and if that author is Quodvultdeus of Carthage, it would be needed to use the whole span of the years of his episcopacy (432/4–440) to make it even possible for him to deliver them. If there are other sermons containing clues of Vandal danger that would be expected to be delivered towards 440, those sermons that do not have this type of hints could have been given in the first years of Quodvultdeus's ministry of the bishop of Carthage, that is, around 435. Some authors consider s2 to precede s1 to be the earliest of the sermons on the creed, and this would be a further argument that makes it possible to place the date of the composition of s2 between 432/4–440, perhaps between 432/4 and 437.¹⁵⁰

149 S2.1.1 (CCL 60:335; tr. Finn 51): *Sacramentum symboli quod accepistis, memoriaeque mandatum pro uestra salute retinetis, noueritis hoc esse fidei catholicae fundamentum, super quod aedificium surrexit ecclesiae, constructum manibus apostolorum et prophetarum.*

150 Nazzaro, 'La produzione omiletica', 45; Id., 'Contro Giudei', 528.

The structure of the sermon is as follows:

1. 1–3a *Exordium*
1. 3b–2 *Section I: What detracts man from God*
 1. 3b–6 Poms of the devil and concupiscence
 - 2 Renunciation of the devil: change of the allegiance
- 3–13 *Section II: The creed*
 - 3 ‘Let us believe in God Father Almighty’ (against the pagans)
 - 4 ‘His Son Jesus Christ’ (against the Jews)
 - 5–6. 2 ‘Under Pontius Pilate, he was crucified and buried’
 6. 3–18a ‘On the third day he rose again’
 6. 18b–7. 5 ‘He was taken into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father’
 - 8 ‘From thence we will come again to judge the living and the dead’
 - 9 ‘We believe in the Holy Spirit’ (on the Trinity against the Arians)
 - 10 ‘The forgiveness of sins’
 - 11 ‘The resurrection of the body’
 - 12 ‘Life everlasting’
 - 13 ‘Through the Church’

The first chapters of the sermon show a strong dependence of the catechesis on Augustine’s theology. It even gives an impression that the preacher was quite recently influenced by the reading, or even a recent reading, of Book 10 of Augustine’s *Confessions*, as there are many allusions precisely to this part of Augustine’s work.¹⁵¹ These characteristics would undoubtedly fit the personality of a diligent friend and pupil of Augustine, who Quodvultdeus was, much more than Augustine himself. As early as in the opening lines quoted above, we find a reference to the memory as a ‘place’ where, among many other realities, the creed, that is, the content of the faith, is stored, as in a repository.¹⁵² For Augustine, memory is a passive faculty, on which the intellect and will exercise their forces.¹⁵³ It is, in fact, the main argument of the first half of Book 10 of the *Confessions*, that it is through memory that a man, after the fall, can encounter a more authentic reality.¹⁵⁴ For God is ‘somehow’ present in the memory and can

¹⁵¹ The mystagogical aspect of *conf.* 10 has been studied by Paul van Geest, *The Incomprehensibility of God: Augustine as a Negative Theologian* (Leuven—Paris—Walpole, Mass.: Peeters, 2011), 88–98.

¹⁵² Aug. *conf.* 10. 8. 13 (CCL 27: 161f.).

¹⁵³ Boulding, 26; J.J. O’Donnell, *Augustine. Confessions* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), iii. 174–178.

¹⁵⁴ O’Donnell, *Confessions*, iii. 178.

be encountered when one goes beyond the memory itself.¹⁵⁵ Where for Augustine's *Confessions*, it is the memories of his past that lead him to confess God's greatness, in S2 it is the creed stored in the memory of the candidates and future 'believers' that becomes a vehicle of their encounter with the saving God.

The first section describes the meaning of the renunciation of the 'pumps of the devil' and of shifting one's allegiance to God. It is not a description of the rite of the scrutiny, but rather a theological description of the change operated by the baptism itself: it is a baptismal, or even mystagogical, catechesis on the reasons hidden behind the outward appearance of the pre-baptismal and baptismal rites. The dependence of this part on Augustine's thought and especially on Books 9–10 of the *Confessions* is evident and even striking. This is particularly true for the fictive talks of the heavens, the sun, the sea, the moon, the stars, and the earth on the unicity of God, the creator of all.¹⁵⁶ But there are other elements: the reference to three types of concupiscence taken from 1 John 2:16 that appear so frequently in the *Confessions* as a *leitmotif*.¹⁵⁷ At the same time, the concentration of the topics of these two books into a short paragraph, paradoxically, excludes the possibility of Augustine's authorship. I am convinced that only a reader of Augustine—and not Augustine himself—would, somewhat in an unoriginal way, rework a previous work, following it so closely.

The topic of the faith opens with a critique of the worship of various cosmic elements and of the cult of Roman gods who were, according to S2, mere men.¹⁵⁸ Quodvultdeus aims at showing how the Christian concept of the invisible and immortal God differs from the materialistic perspective of polytheistic understanding of divinity:

These immortals of yours, who have been commended as beings higher than we are—they are not, therefore, gods, for they can be both understood and seen with these eyes of yours ... But let our sacred literature propose a different sort of God; hear Paul the Apostle: *May honour and glory be, he says, to the immortal, invisible, unchanging, only God* (1 Timothy 1:7). Our God is not seen by the eyes of flesh but by the eyes of the heart; he is seen in eternity, not time.¹⁵⁹

155 Aug. *conf.* 10. 17. 26 (CCL 27: 169); for the treatise on God's presence in memory, see A. Solignac's commentary in BA 14: 564–566.

156 S2 2. 13–22 (CCL 60: 336 f.) and Aug. *conf.* 9. 10. 25; 10. 6. 8 ff. (CCL 27: 148, 158 ff.).

157 S2 1. 4; Aug. *conf.* 10. 35. 54–39. 64 (CCL 27: 184–190).

158 S2 3. 1–4 (CCL 60: 337).

159 S2 3. 3–6 (CCL 60: 337 f.; tr. Finn 54): *Immortales isti qui a nobis superius commemorati sunt,*

This disapproval of polytheistic worship moves quickly to the treatment of the first article of the creed on God the Father almighty.¹⁶⁰ The creed takes part in building 'God's house', that is, the Church; the believers constitute it as 'living stones'.¹⁶¹ Quodvultdeus uses this New Testament concept, present both in Peter and Paul,¹⁶² and engrafts the creed, as a brief and apostolic expression of the faith, into his effort to bring the spiritual understanding of those who form this spiritual house.

Where the first article on the omnipotence of God was directed on building up the faith of the soon-to-be-newborn Christians against the pagans, the second one, that on Jesus Christ, is directed primarily against another religious group, that is, the Jews. These are blamed for their inability to understand the Old Testament promises to point towards the newborn Christ.¹⁶³ This part also contains a highly impressive piece of a fictive address to Herod, who fears the birth of a new king. Although we find the dialogue of the Jews with Herod also in other sermons of Quodvultdeus, in s2 it is highly elaborated.¹⁶⁴

What are you afraid of, Herod, because you hear about the birth of a king? He does not come to topple you but to conquer the devil. However, not understanding these things, you are disturbed and fly into a rage. And in order not to lose the one you are looking for, you will perpetrate great cruelty through the deaths of so many infants.¹⁶⁵

Although the motive of Herod and the apostrophe addressed to him can be traced to Augustine's sermons,¹⁶⁶ in a changed political environment, the words of s2 and also s3 about the cruelty of the king towards the children can be understood, in fact, as a hidden political allegory. With infants, Quodvultdeus

ideo dii non sunt, quia et comprehendi et uideri his oculis possunt ... Nostrae autem sacrae litterae qualem deum praedicent, Paulum audite apostolum: 'immortali', inquit, 'inuisibili, incorruptibili, soli Deo honor et gloria'. Non uidetur Deus noster oculis carnis, sed uidetur oculis cordis; non uidetur ad tempus, sed uidetur in aeternum.

160 s2 3. 1 (CCL 60: 337).

161 s2 1. 2 (CCL 60: 335).

162 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16.

163 s2 4. 5 (CCL 60: 339).

164 s1 5. 11; s3 4. 10; CIPA 10. 4 (CCL 60: 318, 355, 239).

165 s2 4. 11 (CCL 60: 339; tr. Finn 56): *Quid times, Herodes, quia audis regem natum? Non uenit ille ut te excludat, sed ut diabolum uincat. Sed tu haec non intelligens turbaris et saeuis; et ut perdas unum quem quaeris, per tot infantum mortes magnus efficeris crudelis.*

166 Aug., s. 204D. 5 (CSEL 101: 99 f.).

usually has in mind the believers, the children or infants of the Mother Church; the savagery against the children of Bethlehem could have reminded the congregation of the recent Vandal persecution of the Catholic Christians. The fictive oration on Herod could have been understood as a comment on Geiseric's attitude towards the Romans who professed their Catholic faith:

You slay the little ones in the body, yet fear slays you in the heart; also, you think that if you accomplish what you desire, you can live for a long time, even though you seek to kill life itself ... The little ones unknowingly die for Christ, while their parents mourn the dying martyrs; even though the little ones are not yet able to speak, he enables them able to be witnesses ... Christ granted that they might die for him, and arrange it so that by his own blood they would be cleansed from original sin. They were born for death, but immediately death returned them to life.¹⁶⁷

Any political hints or allegory are extremely difficult to be understood by the outsiders, and even more so when the distance of ages comes in. It would therefore be difficult to prove with certainty that the discourse goes against Geiseric and the Vandal rule. The situation, though, would be familiar to the preacher's listeners. If the Arians bribed Catholics to become Arian and if they forced them to be newly baptised, they were, according to Quodvultdeus, killing them spiritually.¹⁶⁸ It is this kind of spiritual death that the new Christians were to avoid, and the text could have been understood as an appeal for the martyrdom that the new Christians should be ready to face. If this were really an address to Geiseric, it would be the only historical remark of the sermon. However, as this reading has to be considered as only highly hypothetical, it cannot be considered in dating the discourse. In fact, Quodvultdeus cannot omit the Arians in s2: the discourse on the equality of the three Persons of the Trinity can be found, similarly to s1, in the treatment of the article on the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁹ The argumentation for the divinity of the Holy Spirit is connected to the next article, on the remission of sins:

¹⁶⁷ S2 4.13, 15, 23 f. (CCL 60: 339; tr. Finn 56 f.): *Necas paruulos corpore, quia te necat timor in corde; et putas si hoc quod cupis impleueris, diu te posse uiuere, cum ipsam uitam quaeras occidere ... Moriuntur paruuli pro Christo nescientes, parentes plangunt martyres morientes: ille nondum loquentes idoneos suos efficit testes ... Praestitit eis Christus ut pro Christo morerentur, praestitit ut suo sanguine ab originali peccato diluerentur. Nati sunt ad mortem, sed continuo eos mors reddidit uitae.*

¹⁶⁸ Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, 112.

¹⁶⁹ S2 9. 1–13 (CCL 60: 345 f.).

And when the remission of sins is attributed to the Holy Spirit, we understand that the entire Trinity without distinction also gives the gift. These things are said to Your Charity on account of the Arian heretics as well as others who have opinions about God other than is worthy. As for the rest that could be said, it is beyond expression and comprehension, nor can it be explained by the words of angels; how much the more impossible for the words of humans!¹⁷⁰

As the last words show, Quodvultdeus shows respect for the mystery of God and its inscrutability. Although he teaches the 'rule of faith' he received at his baptism, most probably from his predecessor Aurelius who might have baptised him, he still knows that, even with the eyes of faith, he is not only unable to put it into human words but also to grasp it entirely with human intellect.

The sermon culminates, as all of Quodvultdeus's sermons do, with an encomium on the Church. This derives not only from the fact that the Church is the topic of the last article of the creed but also from Quodvultdeus's apparent love for her, as well as from his conviction, so typical for African theology, that being part of the Church is necessarily a prerequisite for being in God, and, therefore, for reaching eternal life:

The person who is not in the church of God is able neither to love nor to hold him dear; for everyone outside it is not with God, who is eternal life ... This church, beloved, let us love; may all of us cleave inseparably to such a mother, so loving, so caring, so mindful. With and through her thus may we deserve to be perpetually united to God the Father. Amen.¹⁷¹

It is this love for the Church that is so typical for the sermons of the Quodvultdean corpus that forms one of the internal theological arguments for the same authorship of these sermons.

¹⁷⁰ S2 9. 12 (CCL 60: 346; tr. Finn 63f.): *Et cum remissio peccatorum tribuitur spiritui sancto, intelligimus totam trinitatem etiam hoc donum inseparabiliter operari. Haec propter haereticos Arrianos uel alios qui aliter de deo sentiunt quam dignum est, dicta sunt uestrae caritati. Ceterum illud quod est, ineffabile est, incomprehensibile est, nec uerbis angelicis explicari potest, quanto magis humanis?*

¹⁷¹ S2 12. 6, 10 (CCL 60: 348; tr. Finn 65f.): *Nec amare, nec diligere quis potest, qui in ecclesia eius non est; quoniam omnis qui praeter illam est, nec cum deo est, qui uita aeterna est ... Hanc, dilectissimi, amemus; omnes tali matri sic amanti, sic prospicienti, sic consulenti inseparabiliter inhaereamus: ut simul cum illa et per illam deo patri perpetuo coniungi mereamur. Amen.*

4 *De symbolo* III

A.V. Nazzaro describes the third sermon on the creed (S3; CPL 403) as a mere ‘cento of phrases, images and motives used in the two preceding sermons’.¹⁷² It is true that, in the course of S3, similar topics can be found, including the apostrophe addressed to Herod and the depiction of the slaughtering of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem, also in other works.¹⁷³ The similarity of the topics found in the three sermons might indeed point to one author, who delivered his catechesis for the same occasion repeatedly and made use of topics that were familiar and important to him. I doubt S3 would be just a reworking of the previous sermons. Another perspective is needed, being the one the preacher had when he decided to deliver the sermon. The rhetorical point of view suggests that the third sermon on the creed might be called a ‘mystagogy on the faith’. Its main topic that sets S3 apart from the previous sermons is the preacher’s task of explaining how to believe in what cannot be seen with the physical eyes, how to perceive what is invisible. The creed and Scripture become the vehicle that allows this movement that enables the believer to see with ‘the eyes of faith’ what his physical sight cannot see. This faith is conceived, fed, born, and lived in the context of ‘the Holy Mother Church’, as Quodvultdeus makes clear from the very beginning of the sermon:

Holy Mother the Church, who bore your brothers and sisters with the highest spiritual joy, has conceived you in the womb through this most holy sign of the cross; how long will it be, new offspring of such a future mother, before she restores you, reborn through the washing, to the true light, feeds those whom she carries in her womb with proper food, and joyfully conducts you, rejoicing, to the day of birth?¹⁷⁴

The exordium reminds the audience of the journey they have made in the ‘womb’ of the Church, throughout all of the catechumenate, from the entrance to this period of preparation. They have been given ‘proper food’ throughout this time, consisting not only of the Word of God but also of the pre-baptismal

¹⁷² Nazzaro, ‘La produzione omiletica’, 46.

¹⁷³ S3 4. 16–19 (CCL 60: 355).

¹⁷⁴ S3 1.1 (CCL 60: 349; Finn 67): *Dum per sacratissimum crucis signum uos suscepit in utero sancta mater ecclesia, quae sicut et fratres uestros cum summa laetitia spiritaliter pariet, noua proles futura tantae matris, quousque per lauacrum sanctum regeneratos uerae luci restituat, congruis alimentis eos quos portat pascat in utero, et ad diem partus sui laetos laeta perducatur: ...*

rites during Lent of which its purpose was to nourish the candidates in the womb of the Church to be presented to Christ at their baptism.¹⁷⁵ Just after this summary of what the *competentes* have been going through in their baptismal formation, the preacher comes to the main point of his catechesis: 'You have received also the creed: protection against the poison of the serpent for those in the process of birth.'¹⁷⁶ These words show that the sermon was therefore delivered after the rite of the *traditio symboli*. It is, however, not necessary for the sermon to be delivered right after the celebration of the rites: it might have been delivered either the following morning or even later during the week. Seeing that there exists the danger for the Christians represented by 'the dragon', Quodvultdeus was going to provide them not only with the text of the creed—they had already received it and were supposed to know it by heart—but with a deeper understanding of their faith, expressed in the baptismal *symbolum*. And this is precisely the aim of mystagogy as such, to allow, through the knowledge and understanding of Scripture, of the rites, and of the formulas, to be in touch with the invisible realities contained by the faith and treasured by the Church:

With God's help we are about to explain the sentences of the most holy creed, that we may impress deeply on your understanding the content of each [article]. Your hearts are prepared because your enemy has been driven from them.¹⁷⁷

The preacher alludes to the scrutiny that has also been celebrated and points towards the genuine decision to make this renunciation, while it cannot be made 'only with the sound of the tongue but also in living act'.¹⁷⁸ Quodvultdeus calls for the integrity of Christian life that cannot be hypocritical: the believers cannot 'do one thing, and profess another'.¹⁷⁹ The bishop does not hesitate to resort to quite unexpected expressions when he urges the audience to remain coherent in their faith:

You enter the church for a little to pour out prayers, yet in a short time you can be seen shouting shamelessly in the theatrical spectacles. What

¹⁷⁵ S3 1. 3 (CCL 60: 349).

¹⁷⁶ S3 1. 4 (CCL 60: 349; Finn 67): *Accepistis et symbolum, protectionem parturientis contra uenena serpentis*.

¹⁷⁷ S3 1. 7 (CCL 60: 349; tr. Finn 68): *Ipsas sententias sacratissimi symboli adiuvante domino exponendas suscepimus, ut quid singulae contineant, uestris sensibus intinemus. Parata sunt corda uestra, quia exclusus est inimicus de cordibus uestris*.

¹⁷⁸ S3 1. 11 (CCL 60: 350; tr. Finn 68): *Renuntiate non solum uocibus, sed etiam moribus*.

¹⁷⁹ S3 1. 13 (CCL 60: 350): *quando aliud agis et aliud profiteris*.

do the pomps of the devil, which you have renounced, mean to you? Why do you limp along as if you had a pair of swollen testicles? If God is your master, go after him; if the world, go after it.¹⁸⁰

After showing 'how the world is in ruins'¹⁸¹ and not worth pursuing, the appeal to 'love the Creator' and to go beyond the realm of the visible comes with the desire to perceive the invisible world:

Believe in such a way that you may desire to see what you believe ... If you were to see now, you would not believe; therefore, you believe because you do not see. So believe that you may see. Faith is work; vision is God's reward.¹⁸²

The relationship between the visible, the invisible, and faith is the topic of the next part of the sermon, which, in fact, substitutes the first articles of the creed. Faith is a way to attain what God promises,¹⁸³ and for the audience, it is necessary to grasp a way of surpassing the visible world and come into contact with the invisible one. It involves such fundamental concepts employed by the believer as a prayer that requires the faith to make this step.¹⁸⁴ What Quodvult-deus does is a mystagogy of faith. Essentially, it is the same process used by Ambrose of Milan, Cyril of Jerusalem, and other Church Fathers, which they apply in their mystagogical catecheses.¹⁸⁵ The bishop of Carthage even uses the same means: the formulae of the 'sacrament' of the creed, many biblical quotes, and the liturgical setting.¹⁸⁶

The commentary of the baptismal symbol in s3 does not strictly follow the lines of the creed: its commentary is quite loose and it concentrates, in its first part, on the process of the faith that tries to see with the eyes of faith the invisible realities and God, who lets the believer see what is not visible to his or

180 S3 1. 13–14 (CCL 60: 350; tr. Finn 68): *modo ingrediens ecclesiam orationes fundere, post modicum in spectaculis histrionibus impudice clamare. Quid tibi cum pompis diaboli, quibus renuntiasti? Vtquid claudicatis ambobus inguinibus? Si deus est, ite post illum: si mundus est, ite post illum.*

181 S3 1. 19 (CCL 60: 350; tr. Finn 69): *Ecce ruinosus est mundus ...*

182 S3 2. 1–2 (CCL 60: 351; tr. Finn 69): *Sic crede, ut desideres uidere quod credis ... Si nunc uideres, non crederes: ideo credis, quia non uides; sed ita crede, ut uideas. Fides opus est: uisio dei merces est.*

183 S3 2. 4 (CCL 60: 351).

184 S3 2. 7 (CCL 60: 351).

185 Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 85–87.

186 See especially throughout s3 2–3.

her physical eyes.¹⁸⁷ The text of the creed that the sermon quotes or alludes to starting with S3 4, is, in a way, the tangible or visible element, bestowed on the memory and hearts of the candidates of baptism, that should help them to make the leap of faith, to keep their way intact and safe from the dangers of the world and its owner, the devil. Such a topic is very suitable for a catechesis that aims at preparing the candidates for the celebration of their baptism that included both the renunciation of the devil, his angels, and his pomps, and a solemn profession of faith at the baptismal font. The sermon is structured in the following way:

1. 1–7 *Exordium*

1. 8–13 *Narratio*: The faith

1. 8–21 The devil and his pomps: their attraction and their danger
2. 1–10 Faith in the invisible realities
2. 11–21 Father, the almighty Creator and immortal King
- 3 The invisible God visible with the eyes of faith
- 4 Christ born of a Virgin
- 5 Christ the King crucified
- 6 ‘On the third day’
- 7 ‘Taken up to heaven’
- 8 ‘From thence he will come’
- 9 ‘I believe in the Holy Spirit’
- 10 ‘In the forgiveness of sins’
- 11 ‘Resurrection of the body’
- 12 ‘Life everlasting’
- 13 ‘Holy Church’

The rites of the scrutinies are, again, mentioned only incidentally, for the sermon focuses on the faith and its expression in the creed. Similar to S2, the third sermon on the creed does not contain, apart from the theological polemics with the Arians, any reference to the actual danger of the Vandal invasion. However, there are present quite harsh attacks on the Arian faith.¹⁸⁸ This sermon returns many times to the difference between the ‘worldly king’ and the ‘Eternal King’, that is, God the Father.¹⁸⁹ Quodvultdeus’s insistence that ‘we have a King immortal and invisible’¹⁹⁰ leads us to ask if this discourse on the King

187 S3 2. 1 (CCL 60: 351).

188 S3 13. 5 (CCL 60: 363).

189 S3 2. 15 (CCL 60: 352): *rex terrenus ... rex caelestis*.

190 S3 2. 22 (CCL 60: 352): *intelligamus habere nos Regem immortalem et inuisibilem*.

has anything to do with the historical situation in which the sermon was set. For the Romans, after the establishment of the Republic, the king was allegedly banished from Rome, and the Emperors avoided the title 'king' (*rex*) from the beginnings of the Principate for this reason.¹⁹¹ Considered the advance of a tribal king, Geiseric, and his Vandals in Africa and the danger he represented for the Roman inhabitants of Africa and Catholic Christians, would it be imaginable that the references to the worldly king are not only general, but having the Vandal King Geiseric in mind, as it might be the case in s2? Nonetheless, even if it was not the case, the impact of the Vandals on the audience of s3 or even their presence in the vicinity of Carthage, if not in the city itself, seems to have been imminent. The anti-Arian rhetoric is, again, present in the final encomium on the Church-Bride that 'received everything from her husband as a dowry'.¹⁹² The final lines contrast the heresies, and especially the Arians, who are labelled 'concubines' that do not have legal rights, with the church, the woman married to Christ, her rightful husband:

Whatsoever congregation lurks in the corner of any heresy, is a concubine, not a married woman. O Arian heresy, why do you scoff, why do you despise, why seize on so many issues of the moment? The church suffers injury from you—the mistress from the handmaid—you inflict much abuse on her ... Let the one, holy, and true Catholic queen be recognised, the one to whom Christ gave such sovereignty that, spreading her throughout the whole world and purifying her from every stain and wrinkle, he fashioned such complete beauty for his coming. Amen.¹⁹³

The motif of 'one, holy, and true Catholic' Church closes upon the apostolicity of the Church in the exordium. Moreover, the unique reference to the Church as the 'Queen' might, again, allude to the contrast between the worldly and Eternal King mentioned before, and refer to the political circumstances of the Catholics threatened by the Vandal king Geiseric. This would be another reason for setting the date of composition of s3 to the later years of Quodvultdeus's

191 Liv. 2. 8. 1–2 (ed. Bayet 11f.).

192 s3 13. 4 (CCL 60: 363): *quod a uiro suo accepit in dote*.

193 s3 13. 4–5 and 7 (CCL 60: 363; tr. Finn 81f.): *Quaecumque congregatio cuiuslibet haeresis in angulis sedet: concubina est, non matrona. O haeresis arriana, quid insultas, quid exsufflas, quid etiam ad tempus multa usurpas? Iniuriam a te patitur domina ab ancilla; multas ei ingeris contumelias: licet haec doleat, non te magno metuit sponsa Christi sancta Catholica ... Cognoscatur una sancta et uera regina Catholica, cui regnum Christus tale dedit quod eam per totum mundum diffundens, ab omni macula et ruga mundans, totam pulchram suo aduentui praeparauit. Amen.*

episcopacy, that is, between 437 and 440 when the danger from the 'concubine' Vandals was imminent for the Catholics of Carthage.

5 *De accedentibus ad gratiam* 1

Another two sermons entitled *De accedentibus ad gratiam* (A1–2; CPL 408–409) are dedicated to those who 'who approach the grace', that is, who are preparing for baptism.¹⁹⁴ Both sermons form a sequence: they were delivered one shortly after another, and it is necessary to perceive them as one. They were composed when the war between the Romans and the Vandals was still going on, as the preacher exhorts the audience to persevere in the midst of evil present in the world.¹⁹⁵ That is why the sermons A1–2 can be dated to the years before the capture of Carthage, that is, possibly between 437 and 439.¹⁹⁶ The opening lines start with the topic of the preaching office of the bishop as a debt or obligation towards the candidates for baptism. In this way, it echoes the reward the bishop was speaking about at the end of CN at the occasion of their enrolment, which he was expecting to receive after the candidates' baptism in the form of their prayer:¹⁹⁷

The services are to be acquired from our Lord God, and it is necessary to pay off the debt to Your Love, as it should be. This festive congregation requires us to fulfil our duty and minister you with a sermon. Let the Highest Rich One give us words because a word that can fulfil your wishes is given by the Lord.¹⁹⁸

V. Saxer opines that this catechesis was delivered during the Lent after the enrolment of the candidates and before their renunciation of the devil.¹⁹⁹ While it is true that Quodvultdeus says the candidates 'enrolled their names'²⁰⁰

194 A1 2. 1 (CCL 60: 441).

195 A2 1–3 (CCL 60: 459–461); Nazzaro, 'La produzione omiletica', 57.

196 A2 2. 1 (CCL 60: 459). This hint at the Vandal conquest is noted also by Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 189.

197 CN 10. 9–11 (CCL 60: 392).

198 A1 1. 1–3 (CCL 60. 441): *A domino deo nostro inpetranda sunt munera, et uestrae sanctae caritati solita reddenda sunt debita. Exigit enim haec sollemnitas congregationis officium nostri sermonis. Largiatur summus ille diues nostro ministerio uerbum, quoniam Dominus donat uerbum quod uestrum adimplere posset desiderium.*

199 Saxer, *Rites*, 403.

200 A1 2. 5 (CCL 60: 442): *nomina uestra conscribenda dedistis.*

at the end of the exordium, however, he speaks about 'the sacrament of the previous night' that brought remedy to the *competentes*.²⁰¹ The whole first part of A1, however, mentions the rite of the scrutiny as it has already been performed, and the second part deals with the creed.²⁰² The main part of A2 continues on the exposition of the creed, interrupted at the end of A1. Together with M. Pignot, I suppose A1–2 were delivered after the rites of the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli*, the handing over of the creed. This would place A1–2 in the timespan of the last weeks before the Easter Vigil when baptism would take place.²⁰³

The authorship of A1–2 has been disputed. M. Simonetti ascribed the sermons, together with AQH, and based on Gennadius's information in his *De viris illustribus*, to an otherwise unknown author called Voconius.²⁰⁴ M. Pignot detaches the sermon, as with the others, from Quodvultdeus's authorship.²⁰⁵ I do not find their arguments sufficient to abandon the reasons listed by R. Braun as mentioned earlier to claim Quodvultdeus's authorship of A1–2 which he gives in his *Corpus Christianorum* edition. Therefore, A1–2 are going to be considered the work of the Bishop of Carthage who composed them at the end of the 430s. The structure of the first of the sermons (A1) is the following:

- 1 *Exordium*: The School of the humble Christ
- 2–7 *Section I*: How to Renounce the Devil
 - 2. 1–3. 2 Rite of the Renunciation of the Devil
 - 3. 3–9 How the Devil acts
 - 4–7 How to fight the temptations
- 8–18 *Section II*: The creed
 - 8–15 'We believe in God Father Almighty'
 - 8 The Trinity
 - 9–10 How to answer the objections of the heretics
 - 11 Witnesses from the Gospel
 - 12 Against the Arians
 - 13–15 Other witnesses
 - 16 He was 'born by the power of the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary'
 - 16 Christ's birth
 - 17–18 Biblical witnesses
- 19 *To be continued*: Introduction to David's dance before the Ark

201 A1.1.10 (CCL 60: 441): *sacramentorum eius transactae noctis gustastis aliquam medicinam*.

202 A1.2.1–5 (CCL 60: 441f.).

203 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 187.

204 Simonetti, 'Qualche riflessione', 206 n. 18.

205 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 184.

The exordium explains the occasion and meaning of the catechesis. Quodvultdeus claims, in his *captatio benevolentiae*, that he is not going to persuade the audience using rhetorical features, but that he is going to preach Christ crucified.²⁰⁶ From thence he is coming to the goal of the sermon: to bring the 'child' listeners, that is, the *competentes*, to the school of Christ the Humble:

Learn not to follow the proud devil anymore, but to love Christ the Humble who calls back you who err, and he lifts up you who come to him; he supports the prudent ones, he makes you wise, he teaches you who search, he builds up you unlearned.²⁰⁷

Similarly to Ambrose or Augustine, Quodvultdeus presents his doctrine as that of Christ. The aim of his catechesis is not to impose on others his own ideas, but he tries to teach the new Christians to learn directly from Christ. The logic of the Gospel is not that of this world: in the eyes of the world, it is a 'folly', and Christianity cannot be seen simply as a free ticket to temporal power, nor as a guarantee of certain privileges or worldly goods. Doing this, Quodvultdeus follows the Origenian, Ambrosian, and Augustinian tradition that speaks about Christ the Humble.²⁰⁸ Similarly to these three giants of ancient Christianity, Quodvultdeus repeatedly talks in his sermons about Christ's humility as of the fundament of the Christian life and the life of the Church in any era, especially if the enemies of the faith persecute her.²⁰⁹

But his main inspiration is Augustine for whom the theology of Christ the Humble plays a crucial role.²¹⁰ To open such a topic already before the baptism was not without meaning. When Augustine narrates in his *Confessions* about his conversions, he speaks about how he became stuck on his journey because of his ignorance of the humility of Christ: 'Not yet was I humble enough to grasp

206 A1.1. 4f. (CCL 60: 441).

207 A1.1. 6, 8 (CCL 60: 441): *Discite, paruuli Christi, in ista schola tanti magistri iam non sequi superbum diabolum, sed amare humilem Christum, qui uos reuocat errantes, suscipit uenientes, exhibet prudentes, facit sapientes, docet quaeerentes, erudit insipientes.*

208 Origen, cc 6. 15 (GCS 3: 85f.); Walter Völker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes. Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit und zu den Anfängen christlicher Mystik* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1931), 222. For Ambrose, the humility is the goal of any Christian discipleship: Ernst Dassmann, *La sobria ebbrezza dello Spirito. La spiritualità di S. Ambrogio vescovo di Milano* (Sacro Monte Varese: Romite Ambrosiane, 1975), 224; Christ is for him the Teacher of humility: Ambr., *expos. ps. CXVIII* 16. 4 (SAEMO 10: 88); Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 410–412.

209 Ambr., *expos. ps. CXVIII* 14. 20 (SAEMO 10: 104) could have been a template for this passage. The topic was already encountered in CN and S1.

210 C. Mayer 'Humiliatio, humilitas', in AL 3 (2004–2010), 443–456.

the humble Jesus as my God, nor did I know what his weakness had to teach.²¹¹ The teaching on the humble Christ was, for Augustine, an indispensable part of the instruction of the catechumens. Augustine's 'Teacher of humility and Teacher of the Highest'²¹² teaches the believers with his words and example.²¹³ The 'humble God', however, is for him a synonym of Christ in his two natures. In this way, the teaching on the humility of Christ is not only an ethical requirement but also a theological and ontological statement. When Augustine speaks about the 'humble God' or 'humble Christ', he tries to express the wholeness of Christ's person and the work enacted by the 'Word made flesh',²¹⁴ that is, the heart of the Gospel. The believers make Christ's humility their own, with the help of grace, and they start to express it both in their relations to God and their neighbour; this should become the beginning and the fundament of their spiritual growth (*ascensus*), as it is only through humility that they may become like God.²¹⁵

In Quodvultdeus's work, we find the same interpretation of humility and the humility of God. In A1, the 'heavenly Teacher' should teach the *baptizandi* humility, so that their souls may find peace.²¹⁶ Compared to Augustine, for Quodvultdeus the question was of the humility and humiliation (Latin uses only one word for both terms: *humilitas*) of the Church and of the Christian believers because of what was going on: they were facing the ruling Vandals who confessed their Arianism. In this way, the content and meaning of the scrutinies and the renunciation of the devil is made clear, and the catechesis was to speak to the listeners in every possible life situation they found themselves in:

This teacher shows you there all the duties of piety. If you are small, come, and let yourselves be instructed; if you are sick, run here and you shall find a cure; if you are blind, come to him [*scil.* to Christ] and let yourselves be illuminated; if you search for life, hurry up and you shall be brought to life! For this teacher has acted and does not cease to act in you with the power of his great doctrine in you who have tasted last night a certain medicine of the sacrament.²¹⁷

211 Aug., *conf.* 7. 18. 24 (CCL 27: 108; tr. Boulding 178): *Non enim tenebam deum meum Iesum humilis humilem nec cuius rei magistra esset eius infirmitas noueram.*

212 Aug., *bapt.* 5. 8. 10 (CSEL 51: 271).

213 Aug., *Io. eu. tr.* 59. 2; s. 62. 1.

214 John 1: 14; Mayer, 449.

215 Aug., *f. et symb.* 6 (CSEL 41: 9–11).

216 A1 1. 6–8 (CCL 60: 441).

217 A1 1. 8–10 (CCL 60: 441): *Omnia uobis magister hic exhibet pietatis officia. Si paruuli estis,*

The sacraments, including the pre-baptismal rites, are a remedy applied by Christ, the humble Teacher and Medic. Quodvultdeus relies on the patristic teaching on Christ the Medic²¹⁸ and on Augustine's idea that it is Christ himself who is both the Medic and the medicine.²¹⁹ The humility and humiliation (*humilitas*) is not only a general stance, but it reacts to the rites of the scrutinies to which the next part of the sermon is dedicated. At the scrutinies, the candidates were humiliated when standing naked on a goatskin where they were examined and when the exorcism was administered upon them so that they would be able to renounce the devil and various expressions of his pride to become free to accept the humble Christ.²²⁰ The renunciation, expressed by each of the *competentes* together with the others as part of the only 'person' of the Church, does not only follow Augustine's ecclesiology of 'one heart and one soul towards and in Christ',²²¹ but Quodvultdeus places a strong emphasis on the need for the baptised to remain in the Catholic Church, and on his open antagonism directed against various types of heresies and idolatry:

The peace and love of this Teacher—as we read in the Acts of the Apostles—made at that first calling from all of those who were coming to him one heart and one soul. As I have said, this united great amount of people shows the Church who, with one heart and one mouth, professes to renounce the devil and to believe in God the Almighty. Therefore, if his whole congregation has a single heart and a single soul from God and in God, let us pronounce with a single voice: 'I renounce!'²²²

uenite et erudimini: si infirmi estis, concurrite et curamini: si caeci estis, accedite ad eum et illuminamini: si uitam quaeritis, festinate ut ab eo uiuificemini. Egit enim et agit in uobis artis suae magnam doctrinam, qui sacramentorum eius transactae noctis gustastis aliquam medicinam.

218 Rudolph Arbesmann, 'Christ the *Medicus Humilis* in Saint Augustin', in *Augustinus Magister* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), ii. 623–629; David Vopřada, 'Svatosti—Kristův lék u církevních otců', *MKR Communio* 18/2 (2014), 74–86.

219 Aug., s. 374 auct = s. Dolbeau 23. 23 (ed. Dolbeau 558); Vopřada, *Svatý Augustin*, 83–86.

220 Al 2. 1–4 (CCL 60: 441 f.).

221 See p. 229–230 below.

222 Al 2. 6–3. 1 (CCL 60: 442): *Pax enim et caritas huius magistri, sicut in Actibus apostolorum legitur, omnibus in ipsa prima uocatione ad se uenientibus fecerat cor unum et animam unam. Haec unita multitudo sanctam, ut dixi, demonstrat ecclesiam, quae uno corde et uno ore renuntiare se profitetur diabolo, et credit omnipotenti deo. Si ergo haec omnis sancta congregatio unum cor et unicam animam habet a deo et in deum, simul omnes una uoce dicamus: Renuntio.*

Also, this passage documents to what extent Augustine's ecclesiology pervaded the way Quodvultdeus thought and spoke. Already in Ambrose, we can see that the soul has a spousal relationship to Christ *inside* the spousal relationship of Christ and the Church: when the Bishop of Milan speaks on the soul, it is an 'ecclesiastical soul' (*anima ecclesiastica*).²²³ Augustine goes even further: he often returns to the account of the first Christian community in Jerusalem that 'was of a single heart and of a single soul' (Acts 4:32). At this episode, he finds not only the ideal of life in the Church and of the monastic life,²²⁴ but also the unity of hearts made real in love given by the Holy Spirit, which is also an image of the love between the Persons of the Trinity.²²⁵ In Africa, the liturgical acclamation that opens the central part of the Eucharist had a slightly different reading than the rest of the Western liturgies: 'Lift up the heart!—We have it (directed) towards the Lord!'.²²⁶ The celebrating community, the Church, was perceived as a single heart that is directed towards the Lord to find, at the end of times, peace, when 'out of many souls there will arise a city of people with a single soul'.²²⁷ The same logic is applied by Quodvultdeus when explaining the word 'I renounce' pronounced by the candidates for baptism and by the whole congregation of the Church: the words are pronounced by the single self of the entire Church.

From this point Quodvultdeus starts in his exposition of the rite of the renunciation of the devil, his pomps, and angels. In A1, he underlines the moral side of the spiritual struggle. The Christian fights the temptations not in his organs but in his heart where concupiscence resides. Again, he follows Augustine's teaching on the three types of concupiscence, that of the body, of the eyes, and of worldly ambitions, as we find in the *Confessions*. For the sake of the exposition, though, he focuses solely on the concupiscence of the heart.²²⁸ In this way he can explain why Jesus's advice to a tempted person to pull out one's eye and throw it away, if he is tempted, should not be taken literally, but allegorically (or spiritually):²²⁹ 'Cut off from your heart the intention itself to do

223 Ernst Dassmann, '«Ecclesia vel anima». Die Kirche und ihre Glieder in der Hoheliederklärung bei Hippolyt, Origenes und Ambrosius von Mailand', RQ 61 (1966), 132–137.

224 Possidius, *v. Aug.* 5. 1 (LCPM 45: 152); George Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 59 and *passim*.

225 M.-F. Berrouard, 'Revenez à votre cœur', in BA 72 (1977): 733–735.

226 *Sursum cor!—Habemus ad Dominum!*: Michele Pellegrino, "'Sursum cor'" nelle opere di sant'Agostino', REA 50/1 (2004), 147–174.

227 *Aug. b. coniug.* 18. 21 (CSEL 41: 214).

228 A1 5. 3 (CCL 60: 444).

229 Matthew 5. 29; 18. 9; Mark 9. 46; A1 4. 1–5. 6 (CCL 60: 443f.); partly inspired by Aug. s. 81. 4 (PL 38: 503).

anything bad, and you have managed to cut off the member that offended you, and your body remained intact.²³⁰ The decision to renounce the devil is not a one-time only decision, but it involves all the rest of the believer's life, whenever he is going to fight temptation and his sinful inclinations. Quodvultdeus shows this using the example of the use of the tongue:

The tongue tends to flare up quarrels, to nourish enmities, to blasphemy, to use dirty language. Should we then cut off our tongue so that we might be able to enter God's kingdom? No! But direct this organ to your Maker so that he himself might open your lips and your mouth would proclaim his praise. And this means to renounce the devil's pomps and his angels.²³¹

After renouncing everything evil that man's speech can achieve, Quodvultdeus starts to make a list of all other bodily organs to find out if it is really the 'concupiscence of the heart' that one has to be rid of.²³² Elsewhere, the bishop even addresses those persons consecrated to God and who have decided to remain virgins for Christ: he also speaks about their spiritual struggle.²³³ The passages disclose that not only the *competentes* were present at this catechesis, but, together with them, there were baptised Christians: the sermon was probably delivered in the course of the first part (*missa catechumenorum*) of the Sunday Eucharist. Quodvultdeus's exposition of the renunciation of the devil and of the creed was not only a part of the catechumens' formation, but it was part of the bishop's teaching that involved, to a great extent, all of the assembly. The sermon also aimed at supporting the baptised in their everyday spiritual struggles. The process of conversion is not finished with the first renunciation of evil at one's baptism, because the believers have not yet been perfected. While on earth, they take part in a spiritual fight that does not count only upon human powers. Even here, Quodvultdeus is a faithful heir to Augustine's doctrine on grace, when he exhorts the audience:

Those who fight these temptations know it,
those who battle the body and blood know it:

²³⁰ A14.6 (CCL 60: 443): *Abscide a corde tuo ipsam malae suggestionis intentionem, et abstulisti membrum quodammodo scandalizantem te, integritate corporis permanente.*

²³¹ A14.11–13 (CCL 60: 444): *Lingua excitat ad inflammandas lites, ad inimicitias exercendas, ad blasphemias, ad turpiloquia. Numquid et haec exsecanda est, quo possimus sine ipsa introire in regnum Dei? Absit. Conuerte hoc organum ad artificem suum, ut labia tua ipse aperiat, et os tuum annuntiet laudes eius: et hoc est renuntiare pompis diaboli, et angelis eius.*

²³² A15.3 (CCL 60: 444).

²³³ A16.1–10 (CCL 60: 445).

they know that grace helps them and provides them with God's gifts,
 they know that they can stand this fight with help from above,
 they know that lead by grace they can claim victory,
 they know that as victors they can expect the heavenly palm.²³⁴

For Quodvultdeus, the spiritual fight is not only a negative reality that requires just renouncing the evil and austerity towards the 'body'. There is also a positive faith, expressed in the creed. The sermons A1–2 therefore throw light not only on the pre-baptismal rites of renunciation of the evil and on handing over the creed, but on the whole process where the candidate has to take off the old, previous man and take on faith in Christ.²³⁵ Renouncing anything that leads someone from God and faith in God Almighty is, in fact, Quodvultdeus's definition of Christian practice. It does not finish with baptism, but it is only there that it begins to come true. We should not forget that in the tense air of the 430s, Quodvultdeus implies here a traditional military vocabulary to describe the Christian life. With awareness of the armed conflict with the Vandals this depiction received a new dimension the Christians called to the spiritual struggle had at their disposal that goes back to the most ancient African tradition of Christianity in Tertullian.

At this point, the second part of the sermon opens with the exposition of the creed. The discourse keeps the same structure based on the creed, but the treatise is much looser and cannot be considered a strict commentary on the *symbolum* as S1. The theme of non-Catholic groups opens up from the very beginning:

The Catholic faith believes in the almighty God, and it destroys the false comments of all heretics, pagans, and Jews.²³⁶

Despite this language, so harsh for the ear of a modern reader, I do not find it acceptable to claim that the exposition on the creed in A1–2 has primarily 'an anti-pagan, anti-Jewish, and anti-Arian function'.²³⁷ Surely, its character is

234 A1 6. 10 (CCL 60: 445f.): *Nouerunt ergo ista qui pugnant, nouerunt qui carni et sanguini repugnant, nouerunt adiutricem et gubernatricem diuini muneris gratiam, nouerunt desuper adiuti hanc pugnam facile superare, nouerunt gratia perducente ad uictoriam peruenire, nouerunt uictores palmam caelestem desuper exspectare.*

235 A1 7. 7–9 (CCL 60: 446).

236 A1 8. 1 (CCL 60: 446): *Omnipotentem Deum dum credit fides catholica, omnium haereticorum, Paganorum, Iudaeorumque destruit falsa commenta.*

237 Nazzaro, 'La produzione omiletica', 58.

undoubtedly polemical, inserted in the situation of the Church that finds herself in the midst of these groups. But the function of the discourse is primarily educational, and not a polemical one. It was delivered at the liturgy following the pre-baptismal rites, and non-Catholic groups were not even present. The main topic of the presentation is the Catholic faith in the unity of the Trinity and the unspeakable action of the divine Persons. Only afterwards, Quodvultdeus presents various erroneous views on God, that is, those of pagans, Manichaeans, Sabellians, and Arians. The arguments the bishop uses against the heretics who claim they are Christian are taken from the Gospel. Quodvultdeus addresses the absent heretics using the apostrophe:²³⁸

Heretics, hear the Gospel, and let yourselves be convinced by its text that you take as the fundament for your boasting! ... Have you heard it, Sabellian? Have you heard it too, Arian, how you should believe in God the Father almighty?²³⁹

Among the biblical witnesses that support the Catholic view of the Trinity and the equality of the divine Persons, a special place belongs to the commentary on Psalm 61:12 LXX: *Once God has spoken*, that is interpreted by Quodvultdeus as a prophecy about the only Word of the Father.²⁴⁰ A similar way of exposition is used when treating on Christ's nativity of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. In the following part, the collection of testimonies focuses on two psalm verses. The first of these verses—Psalm 84:11: *Truth will spring up from the earth, and Justice will lean down from heaven*—adopts Augustine's christological exegesis of the double nativity of Christ present foremost in his Christmas sermons.²⁴¹ The second passage—Psalm 44:2–5: *Of all men you are the most handsome, gracefulness is a dew upon your lips*—concentrates on Christ's earthly and miraculous birth from the Virgin Mary.²⁴² The audience is presented with a number of christological titles related to the Incarnation:

Do you want to hear who is this who has been born in this way? Listen who and how great he is: he is the Word of the Father, the Maker of the

²³⁸ A1 10. 2, 9; 12. 1 (CCL 60: 449 f.).

²³⁹ A1 11. 2, 6 (CCL 60: 450): *Audite, haeretici, euangelium, ut unde gloriamini, inde conuincamini ... Audisti, Sabelliane? Audisti et tu, Arriane, quomodo credere debeas Deum patrem omnipotentem?*

²⁴⁰ A1 12. 15–14. 12 (CCL 60: 451–453).

²⁴¹ A1 16. 8–17. 1 (CCL 60: 455); Aug., s. 185. 1–2; 189. 2; 191. 2; 192. 1 (PL 38: 997 f., 1005, 1009–1011).

²⁴² A1 18. 1–10 (CCL 60: 456 f.).

world, the Light of heavens, the Peace of earth, the Integrity of the Virgin, the Fertility of the Mother, the Praise of the Angels, the Salvation of humanity, the Way of the abandoned ones, the Remission of the erring ones, the Remedy of the injured, the Jubilation of the good, the Victory of the martyrs, the Palm of the babies.²⁴³

There is no usual peroration in this sermon; the reason for this is that the preacher realised he was already speaking for too long.²⁴⁴ The last lines of A1 are therefore a kind of a trailer for a sequel that would come in the next sermon (A2). Quodvultdeus alludes that he is going to interpret David's dance before the Ark which contains, according to him, a great 'sacrament' of the Lord's suffering.²⁴⁵ The second sermon would continue from where the first one ended, that is, from the article that professes Christ's suffering and death.

6 *De accedentibus ad gratiam* II

The second sermon addressed to those who 'access the grace' of baptism (A2; CPL 409) is a continuation of the first sermon (A1) that finished with a preview of the coming exegesis of David's dance before the Ark. A2 can be dated to the same year as A1, that is, to the times when an intense conflict between the Vandals and the Romans began.²⁴⁶ As in other sermons, Quodvultdeus in the opening lines asks his audience for their prayers, so that he can perform his duty of a preacher:

I know what I promised to Your Love with the Lord's help; both you and I are aware that now the time comes for me to pay my debt. But remember that I expect something from you. You demand my promised sermon, I ask you for a brotherly prayer. So, do first what I ask, and with help, I am going to give back what I am indebted.²⁴⁷

243 A1 16. 2 (CCL 60: 454f.): *Vis nosse qualis est, qui sic natus est? Audi quis et quantus est: uerbum patris, artifex mundi, lumen caeli, pax terrae, integritas uirginis, fecunditas matris, angelorum laus, hominibus salus, desertorum uia, errantibus uenia, uulneratorum medicina, bonorum iocunditas, martyrum uictoria, infantium palma.*

244 A1 19. 8 (CCL 60: 458).

245 A1 19. 6f. (CCL 60: 458).

246 A2 2. 1 (CCL 60: 459).

247 A2 1. 1f. (CCL 60: 459): *Scio quid, adiuuante domino, promiserim caritati uestrae, et tempus esse reddendi debiti utrique cognoscimus. Sed mementote, quid etiam ego praeexigam a*

The exordium wants to move the audience towards their decision to follow God and to leave worldly joys that are a consequence of sin. The sermon follows the following scheme:

1. 1–2 *Exordium*
1. 3–3. 10 *Section I: Hurry up to God*
 1. 3–2. 2 Faith in the world, or in God?
 2. 3–11 Run towards God
 - 3 Sin and love for worldly joys hinder the run towards God
- 4–12 *Section II: Continuation of the exposition on the creed*
 - 4–6 Christ 'born of the Virgin Mary suffered under Pontius Pilate'
 - 4–5 David dancing before the Ark
 - 6 Spiritual exegesis of the episode
 7. 1–8. 3 Christ was 'crucified': Peter and the Church
 8. 4–9. 9 'On the third day he rose from the dead': the Eucharist
 - 10 The Church-Bride
 - 11 Unity of the Trinity
 - 12 'Life everlasting', 'Holy Mother Church'
- 13 *Peroratio: Church humbled by the heretics*

Quodvultdeus does not separate the exposition of the faith contained in the creed from the moral decision inherent to baptism, without ceasing to emphasise that God's mercy is at the candidates' disposal and that they should hurry up to draw from it. Apart from the topic of the spiritual struggle of the Christian believers between Christ's Resurrection and his second coming,²⁴⁸ in A2 he tries to ask how a man can see beyond the reality of the visible world and he looks for reasons why to go and search for God. He asks why men and women are so fascinated by 'temporal joys from various evils'.²⁴⁹ The reason for this he finds in the fact that 'no one is without sin' and God's mystery is so profound that many are scared off by it.²⁵⁰ In fact, he warns that the 'pit prepared for the sinners is very deep'²⁵¹ and that it is not enough to ask what evil there is in present time, but what the sinners are to expect in the future.²⁵² In this way, the emphasis of A2 is similar to that of S3.

uobis. Exigitis a me promissum sermonem, exigo a uobis fraternam orationem. Facite itaque prius quod peto, et adiutus reddam et ipse quod debeo.

248 A2 2. 3–5 (CCL 60: 459f.).

249 A2 3. 1 (CCL 60: 460): *quod te mouet gaudium temporale malorum?*

250 Job 14:4 LXX; A2 3. 6 (CCL 60: 461): *nullus est immunis a peccato.*

251 A2 3. 1 (CCL 60: 460): *ipsa est alta fouea peccatori.*

252 A2 2. 9 (CCL 60: 460).

In this way, the bishop prepared his position to introduce the Catholic teaching, including that on Christ's suffering and death that was so difficult to digest for many. Quodvultdeus's thinking is penetrated by Augustine's idea of the redemption conceived as repaying the price for a sinner. The devil deprived Adam of everything, and it was Christ who paid this debt for him.²⁵³ Christ's physical suffering is interconnected with human concupiscence and, concurrently, Christ's humiliation has a relation to human pride. Christ's cross has cancelled the debt towards the devil, but to appropriate the effects of redemption, the Christian has ceased to serve sin and to 'crucify' his body with its desires and aspirations.²⁵⁴ At this point the bishop wants his audience to leave a 'foreign house', that is, the world, where people sin to their own ruin and to decide to go every day to the house prepared for him by the Lord.²⁵⁵

And so, my brothers, let every soul hurry up—if it does not have resources to pay off the debt—and run to the true Rich One who paid the debt he did not owe for everybody that belongs to him. Let therefore every soul hear the one who calls and not despise the Lord's mercy, and not ridicule someone who builds an Ark or the king who dances before the Ark.²⁵⁶

Quodvultdeus arrives at this topic which he announced at the end of A1 and to the commentary on Christ's suffering and death, that is, on the fundamental teaching of Christianity. To do this, he uses a spiritual exegesis of David's dance before the Ark of the Covenant where Saul's daughter Michal despises his behaviour.²⁵⁷ The episode taken from II Kings 6 becomes an image of Christ's suffering on the cross. In this way, David performed 'a mystical sacrament' or

253 A2 2. 5 (CCL 60: 460).

254 Aug. *exp. prop. Rm.* 40. 48. 4–6 (CSEL 84: 21f.); c. *Adim.* 21 (CSEL 25/1: 180f.); *en. Ps.* 37. 16 (CCL 38: 149); J. McWilliam Dewart, 'Augustine's Developing Use of the Cross: 387–400', *AugSt* 15 (1984), 28. It is necessary to look for the roots of this doctrine of Augustine's in Ambrose: J. Warren Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue: The Theological Foundation of Ambrose's Ethics* (New York: OUP, 2011), 70.

255 A2 3. 7–9 (CCL 60: 461).

256 A2 4. 1–2 (CCL 60: 461): *Itaque, fratres mei, festinet unaquaeque anima, ut si non habet unde reddat, ad illum uerum diuitem currat, qui pro omnibus suis reddidit quod non debebat. Audiat ergo omnis anima uocantem, non contemnat domini misericordiam prorogantem, nec irrideat arcam fabricantem, aut illum regem ante arcam ludentem.* See also S3 7. 4 (CCL 60: 359).

257 A2 6. 1 (CCL 60: 462).

'the Lord's sacraments',²⁵⁸ as Quodvultdeus explains in his allegorical exposition where he goes from 'the figure to the reality, from the parable to the spiritual understanding':²⁵⁹

Let us also tell our Lord God, to the Saviour David and our King who became for us from David's seed according to the flesh ... Have a look at this David, our King, i.e., Christ Crucified how he fights leaping before the Ark of his body! Since when they lead Christ to the torture when the high priest questions him, his Ark is already moving in some way.²⁶⁰

Quodvultdeus explains allegorically the lifting of the Ark as a moment when they put the creed on Christ's shoulders, the whirling before the Ark representing the mocking of Christ by the soldiers and the devil himself; the exhibition David made of himself under the eyes of his servant-maids as stripping Christ of his clothes.²⁶¹ The bishop tries to answer a question that had to come into the mind of many of his listeners who were soon to approach baptism: what makes God who hangs naked without splendour and beauty so attractive?²⁶² To answer this, Quodvultdeus turns to the example of Peter and the bishop develops a fictive dialogue between him and Christ, where Peter is to be brought to conversion and recognition of his Lord.²⁶³ In this way, the listeners were, in a way, drawn inside the pivotal moment of the history of salvation. The exposition of the episode was not only an individual one but also an ecclesiological one. Where the Church-Queen watches her King leaping before the Ark on the creed, Michal represents the Synagogue and everybody who mocks Christ's cross.²⁶⁴ The humble and humbled Church is known for its worship of the humble and naked Christ; it is the heretics who mock Christ on the creed and who do not accept the unity of the divine Persons of the Trinity.²⁶⁵

258 A2 6. 1 (CCL 60: 462); *mysticum sacramentum; dominica sacramenta*.

259 A2 6. 1 (CCL 60: 462); *Transeamus iam a figura ad speciem, a parabola ad spiritalem intellectum*.

260 A2 6. 1, 7 (CCL 60: 462f.); *Dicamus et nos domino Deo nostro, saluatori David regi nostro, qui factus est nobis ex semine David secundum carnem ... Intendite David istum regem nostrum, Christum scilicet crucifixum, ante arcam carnis suae ludendo pugnantem. Quando enim Christus ad passionem ducebatur, quando a pontifice audiebatur, eius iam quodammodo arca mouebatur*.

261 A1 6. 9–11 (CCL 60: 463).

262 A2 7. 3 (CCL 60: 463).

263 A2 7. 7–15 (CCL 60: 464).

264 A2 8. 1 (CCL 60: 464–465).

265 A2 10–11 (CCL 60: 466–468).

The knowledge of Christ's divinity and his humiliation on the cross is crucial for the listener who is to be baptised, as he is required to profess this mystery of faith, that is, Christ's redemption on the cross.²⁶⁶ The passage on David dancing before the Ark is a magnificent example of the mystagogical catechesis *Quodvultdeus* delivered, which points to the innermost meaning of baptism and the Eucharist. In fact, the following exegesis of Christ's revelation to the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24 on Christ's Resurrection, can be read understood in the Eucharistic perspective.²⁶⁷

The African versions of the creed finish with the articles on 'the life everlasting' and 'the Holy Church'. Similarly, A2 finishes with them, joining, however, both articles together. Eternal life is possible only in the Holy Church and it the believer can acquire the eternal life only if he or she remains part of this Church:

If we long for the everlasting life and the true homeland, ... let us endure the suffering together with the tormented mother, so that we who desire the tents of the sinners would not be swallowed by the pit of the sinners. True mother, Holy Mother Church, chaste Mother, gather to yourself your children you yourself nourished! You are the Virgin and we are your children. You are intact, and you gave birth to all of us. You are beautiful and no concupiscence has touched you who were kept chaste and intact by your man who discovered you brought forth the fruits of spiritual progeny.²⁶⁸

For *Quodvultdeus*, the motherhood and the virginity of the Church who conceives and bears new Christians is bound together with the central mystery of the Christian faith, namely the Incarnation where Mary, the Virgin Mother, conceives and brings forth Christ the Bridegroom of the Church. Having been received into the catechumenate, *Quodvultdeus*'s listeners were conceived by the Church, their baptism is to become their birth, and even after the birth, the believers are to feed at the breasts of the Mother Church. On the contrary, a second baptism (*rebaptisma*) as practised by the Arians represents a mortal

266 A2 8. 3 (CCL 60: 465).

267 A2 8. 4–9. 9 (CCL 60: 465f.).

268 A2 12. 1–4 (CCL 60: 468): *Si aeternam uitam ueramque patriam desideramus ... tribulationes cum tribulata matre sustineamus, ne appetentes tabernacula peccatorum, fouea nos absorbeat haereticorum. Mater uera, mater sancta ecclesia, mater casta, mater pulchra, collige ad te et tene filios tuos quae ipsa nutristi. Virgo es, et omnes filii tu sumus; integra es, et omnes tu peperisti: pulchra es, et nulla te mala tangit concupiscentia, quae a uiro tuo seruarius casta et integra, a quo spiritali prole inueniris esse fecunda.*

poisoning.²⁶⁹ In the final peroration, Quodvultdeus addresses the Arian heresy with an apostrophe: the Arians disturb the spousal relationship between Christ and the Church. He even reproaches them their inability to believe that 'the Catholic Church keeps the true faith, not teaching that it is necessary to preserve the Roman faith', that is, the faith professed by the Church of Rome.²⁷⁰ Quodvultdeus even accuses Arian clergy of violence against Catholic Christians by the Vandal believers.²⁷¹ The sermon culminates with an exhortation to the 'children' of the Church to 'honour and love this true mother,' that is, the Church, 'to keep the unity and to desire to see the unspeakable Trinity'.²⁷² This final exhortation of A1–2 can be fittingly set into the historical context of the religious struggle between Vandal Arians and the Catholics of Carthage.

7 *Contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arrianos*

Among the sermons attributed to Quodvultdeus, several of them bear a deceiving title in the manuscript tradition. One of them is called *Against the Jews, Pagans, and the Arians* (*Contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arrianos*; CIPA; CPL 404).²⁷³ The editor of the work might have been misled by strong polemics against the aforementioned three religious groups. The title of CIPA is not the only problematic aspect of this sermon. Where the occasion of S1–3 and A1–2 is, without much doubt, that of the *traditio symboli*, the language of CIPA is ambiguous to the extent that it leaves a possibility that it might comment upon baptism itself. CIPA, nonetheless, goes right to the heart of the meaning of the goal of baptismal preparation and of baptism itself: it is an excellent example of baptismal mystagogy and a glimpse into Quodvultdeus's understanding of his ministry of a bishop.

According to A.V. Nazzaro, CIPA was delivered on Easter 439.²⁷⁴ The incipit confirms that CIPA was most probably delivered in times of Vandal occupation:

In the middle of sufferings and anxieties of the present time and duties coming from our servitude, we are obliged not to remain silent, most

²⁶⁹ A2 12. 6 (CCL 60: 469).

²⁷⁰ A2 13. 6 (CCL 60: 470): *Non crederis ueram fidem tenere catholicae, quae fidem non doces esse seruandam romanam.*

²⁷¹ A2 13. 11 (CCL 60: 470).

²⁷² A2 13. 13 (CCL 60: 470): *Vos autem, filii dilectissimi, honorate et diligite hanc ueram matrem, tenete unitatem, concupiscite uidere ineffabilem trinitatem.*

²⁷³ CPL 404; CCL 60: 225–258.

²⁷⁴ Nazzaro, 'La produzione omiletica', 38; Id., 'Quoduultdeus: un vescovo', 396.

beloved—although in this situation it would be more profitable to cry, than to say anything.²⁷⁵

Setting the date of CIPA to 439 can be supported by a strong anti-Arian polemics that can be found in the sermon. It allows us to suspect that the Vandals are in power and that their Arian conception of Christianity has started to have leverage even in Carthage. M. Pignot, who dates all sermons attributed to Quodvultdeus between 420s and 440, also opts, due to the references to tumult and war in the discourse, for the later years.²⁷⁶

Much different, however, is the date proposed by F. Mbonigaba who assumes that Quodvultdeus delivered this sermon when he was still only a deacon, in the presence of bishop Capreolus, that is, before the year 437.²⁷⁷ F. Mbonigaba is not convinced about the correspondence of the incipit of CIPA with the last years of Roman rule over Carthage.²⁷⁸ Moreover, his argumentation is based on an ambiguous meaning of the word *paterfamilias* that can be found already in the next line: 'I ask your love that you willingly accept what the *paterfamilias* is going to minister to you through us.'²⁷⁹ The usual meaning of *paterfamilias* is the father of a household or a family, F. Mbonigaba asserts that here it is to be understood as 'bishop', father of the Christian community in Carthage. Quodvultdeus, would, therefore, deliver this sermon as a deacon and dates CIPA between 432 and 437, when Quodvultdeus became, according to F. Mbonigaba, the bishop.²⁸⁰ However, as I argued before, it is necessary to place the beginning of Quodvultdeus's episcopacy between 432 and 434.²⁸¹ Mbonigaba's hypothesis would push the origin of the sermon even before these years, that is, to the early 430s.

Although it is true that the Vandals had already advanced in their campaign in those years, there was still no imminent danger for the city of Carthage and its inhabitants. I would find such an early date very unlikely for CIPA and would place the sermon in the late 430s when the anxiety of the outcome of Vandal incursion among the population would be much higher. Moreover, it

275 CIPA 1. 1 (CCL 60: 227): *Inter pressuras atque angustias praesentis temporis et nostrae officia seruitutis cogimur, dilectissimi, non tacere, cum potius expediat flere magis quam aliquid dicere.*

276 Pignot, 'Catechuminate', 189.

277 Mbonigaba, 69.

278 Ibidem, 70 f.

279 CIPA 1. 2 (CCL 60: 227): *peto caritatem uestram ut quae ipse paterfamilias per nos uobis ministraverit, libenter accipere dignemini.*

280 Mbonigaba, 73.

281 See pp. 62–63 above.

is difficult to agree with Mbonigaba's interpretation of *paterfamilias* in CIPA 1. 2 where other instances in Quodvultdeus's sermons show that the term has to be understood as a divine or christological title. In this sense it is used in TB1 in relation to the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32) where it is God, namely Christ, who is called *paterfamilias* there.²⁸² Similarly, it is to the Lord–*paterfamilias* to whom the preacher of UQF expects his eternal reward and who pronounces the parable of the sower.²⁸³ Besides, neither Augustine nor other Church Fathers call the bishop a *paterfamilias*, but on the contrary, there are numerous texts where Augustine uses *paterfamilias* as a christological title.²⁸⁴ After all, even F. Mbonigaba admits that his interpretation of *paterfamilias* in CIPA is a theological one and that it describes 'the caring love of God towards mankind'.²⁸⁵ Lastly, I am not convinced that a deacon would deliver a sermon in the presence of his bishop, as this task was reserved to the bishops until the very end of the fourth century, when priests, such as Augustine, are witnessed to preach in the presence of a bishop.²⁸⁶ The deacons had their role during the baptismal rites, but we do not know anything about them preaching at this date.²⁸⁷

Therefore, I do not see reasons to date CIPA to the years of Quodvultdeus's deacon ministry. On the contrary, Quodvultdeus portrays himself in this *captatio benevolentiae* as a bishop whose task is to guard and build the faith of his people: he stays in the tradition of ancient bishops who considered their own salvation and eternal reward conditioned by the salvation and spiritual progress of those who had been entrusted to them.²⁸⁸ That is why he urges his audience 'to freely accept what the *paterfamilias* presented to you through us'.²⁸⁹ It need not, therefore, necessarily be the year of Vandals' capture of Carthage. The years marked by 'suffering and anxiety' had begun for the population of Carthage already, as they could have observed how they started

282 TB1 7. 7 (CCL 60: 433).

283 UQF 1. 7; 2. 1 (CCL 60: 395 f.); *Domine paterfamilias; Dominus atque paterfamilias*.

284 *C. Faust.* 6. 9 (CSEL 25/1: 448); *Io. eu. tr.* 67. 2 (CCL 36: 496 f.); *en. Ps.* 49. 13; 109. 15 (CCL 38: 586; 40: 161); s. Caillau 2. 5. 1f. (MA 1: 249 f.); Robert A. Markus and Robert Dodaro, 'Episcopus', in AL 2 (1996–2002), 882–893.

285 *C. Faust.* 16. 9 (CSEL 25/1: 448); *Io. eu. tr.* 67. 2 (CCL 36: 496–497); *en. Ps.* 49. 13; 109. 15 (CCL 38: 586; 40: 161); s. Caillau 2. 5. 1–2 (MA 1: 249–250).

286 *Aug. ep.* 21. 3 (CSEL 34/1: 51).

287 Faivre, 400; George Lawless, 'Preaching', in ATAE, 675.

288 Among many others: *Ioh. Chrys. hom. Mt* 86. 4 (PG 59: 47); *hom. Act* 3. 4 (PG 60: 39 f.); *Max. Tur. s.* 28. 1 (CCL 23: 108); *Aug. ep.* 21. 4 (CSEL 34/1: 52).

289 CIPA 1. 2 (CCL 60: 227): *peto caritatem uestram ut quae ipse paterfamilias per nos uobis ministrauerit, libenter accipere dignemini*.

their rule in various parts of Africa and especially in Numidia. Geiseric took the city by surprise but it would be understandable that the feeling of imminent danger could have been present in the population, as it usually is before various coups or changes of regime. If Quodvultdeus was exiled in spring or early summer 440, CIPA could have been pronounced even after Vandals took Carthage; in this case, the mood of the prooemium would be totally appropriate. Therefore, I suggest that CIPA would have been delivered between 437 and 440.

The exordium then offers a mystagogical catechesis that applies Romans 13:12 to the rites of scrutiny and the *traditio symboli* that were celebrated the previous night, showing them the meaning of these rites and of the whole process of conversion.²⁹⁰ At first sight, it is not altogether clear what rites Quodvultdeus has in mind. R.J. De Simone and A.V. Nazzaro assume that CIPA was delivered during the Easter Vigil where Nazzaro proposes that the sermon would be a commentary on the baptismal rite of renunciation (*abrenuntiatio*) and on the creed, with a strong anti-heretical, anti-Jewish emphasis.²⁹¹ F. Mbonigaba assumes that CIPA was delivered, with all possibility, on the occasion of the *traditio symboli* and also M. Pignot describes the sermon as a catechesis on the *traditio symboli*, similar to the other five sermons that were delivered on that occasion (S1–3; A1–2), although M. Pignot makes clear, as regarding other sermons, that ‘it can be only inferred that all the sermons followed exactly the same liturgical service’.²⁹² V. Saxer claims that it was delivered ‘after the renunciation of Satan’,²⁹³ although he is not precise about whether the scrutiny was ritually distinct from the handing over of the creed. At the end of the catechesis, though, Quodvultdeus applies two parts of Romans 13:12 respectively to the ‘renunciation of the devil, his pomps, and angels,’ and to the creed.²⁹⁴ There cannot be doubt that CIPA was delivered immediately afterwards or on the next day after the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli* were celebrated.²⁹⁵ The whole passage is analysed as an example of Quodvultdeus’s mystagogical method in Chapter Seven.

290 CIPA 1. 3–11 (CCL 60: 227 f.). It is worth noting that the following verses of Romans 13:13–14. 1 accompany and define the conversion of Augustine and Alypius in the garden at Milan, as it is described in *Aug. conf.* 8. 12. 29 (CCL 27: 131).

291 De Simone, 277; Nazzaro, ‘La produzione omiletica’, 38.

292 Mbonigaba, 65–67; Pignot, ‘Catechuminate’, 194.

293 Saxer, *Rites*, 404.

294 CIPA 1. 11 (CCL 60: 228).

295 An indication of the time when CIPA was delivered could be provided by the word *modo* in CIPA 1. 11 (CCL 60: 228); however, the amount of elapsed time it describes ranges from ‘just now’ to ‘quite recently’.

It has already been pointed out that the structure of CIPA is in its general traits similar to other sermons on the creed: after the exordium, there comes a commentary on the renunciation of the devil, and also on the creed:

1 *Exordium*

2–4 *Section I: Renunciation of the devil*

5–22 *Section II: The creed*

5–8 'Believe in God Father Almighty'

9–17 'We believe also in his Son Jesus Christ born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary'

9–10 The article of the creed

11–13 Christ witnessed by the Old Testament

14 Christ witnessed by the New Testament

15–16 Christ witnessed by the pagan literature

17 Christ witnessed by the nature's elements

18. 1–6 Christ's suffering and death

18. 7 'On the third day, he rose from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father'

19 'We believe in the Holy Spirit,' 'the remissions of sins,' one baptism

20–22 The 'Catholica', life everlasting²⁹⁶

Quodvultdeus himself describes the sequence when he states that it is not possible to speak of God the Father almighty and his gift towards humanity before treating the devil and renouncing him, his pomps, and the deeds of darkness.²⁹⁷ First, he describes the devil and the way he tore man from his inheritance. His aim is to show that the devil is not equal to God, but rather he is 'an angel separated because of his pride from God' and 'the author of lies'²⁹⁸ who defiled man created from 'the dust of the earth to God's image'.²⁹⁹ In this way, man was robbed of his chastity, temperance, charity, and immortality. As such, left naked and dirty, man was given the devil's rags to put on, so that the devil might mock him and bind him in his dominion. The whole panorama of the history of salvation is presented here, because not only the first man is found under the subjection of the devil, but his entire progeny was bound in the same way.³⁰⁰

296 Mbonigaba, 91f. offers a slightly alternative structure of the sermon.

297 CIPA 2. 1 (CCL 60: 228).

298 CIPA 2. 2 (CCL 60: 228).

299 CIPA 2. 4 (CCL 60: 228).

300 CIPA 2. 5f. (CCL 60: 229).

The devil, his pomps, and angels represent a 'harmful inheritance'³⁰¹ that a man has to renounce at his baptism with the help of Christ's grace and in this way to be set free.³⁰² That is why Quodvultdeus exhorts his audience to be rid of the harmful inheritance originating from the devil: although the listeners have already renounced the devil and what belongs to him, still they have to make an effort to renounce him continuously.³⁰³

The figurative language of 'the devil's rags' and 'Christ's garment' must have been clear and even tangible to Quodvultdeus's audience. Both of these symbols would evoke the scrutinies and the baptismal rites. After all, in Antiquity, as we have already seen, it was not usual to baptise someone clothed: he had to undress from his old clothes, then he was baptised naked, and after his baptism he received a new, shining robe. In the scrutinies, the candidates took off their clothes as well for the examination, to be prepared to receive a new garment at their baptism. With this, there came a warning not to return back to what the candidates had renounced at the scrutinies and at the baptism, unless the devil would 'recognise his rags on them' and find them guilty, although Christ wanted to set them free.³⁰⁴

As the renunciation of evil is not, in fact, only a one-time event but changes into a lifetime spiritual struggle, Quodvultdeus's exhortation to persevere in the new way of life is not surprising. The same is also valid for the call to keep the baptismal creed intact, as the faith expressed in it became their new inheritance: 'Believe in God the Father almighty! Changing your father, change also your inheritance!'³⁰⁵ The way of life based on their baptism does not involve only virtuous life, but it is inserted in the context of faith professed by the Catholic Church, which is essential for gaining their inheritance one day, that is, the inheritance of eternal life. This is the reason why Quodvultdeus dedicates a much lengthier part of his sermon to the exposition of the creed.

The creed is for Quodvultdeus, again, a *sacramentum* as it reveals God's life and action to the believer and makes it accessible for him.³⁰⁶ The theory and practice go hand in hand: the doctrine on the Trinity is the basis of the believers' moral and spiritual life. As belief in the Trinity cannot be separated from

301 CIPA 3. 1 (CCL 60: 229).

302 CIPA 3. 7f. (CCL 60: 230). For Quodvultdeus's portrayal of the devil, see also p. 261–264 below.

303 CIPA 3. 1f. (CCL 60: 229).

304 CIPA 4. 1 (CCL 60: 230f.).

305 CIPA 5. 1 (CCL 60: 232): *Credite in deum patrem omnipotentem. Mutantes patrem, mutate haereditatem*. Quodvultdeus follows the older tradition of baptismal instruction: see Aug. s. 59A. 2 (CSEL 101: 40).

306 CIPA 9. 3 (CCL 60: 238).

life, it is not an extra. The exposition of the creed keeps its linear progress and follows singular articles of the creed, although some articles are given much more attention and space than others.

God the Father is presented as 'God of all' who is Father from eternity.³⁰⁷ The Son, the 'Light from Light', is God's Wisdom and he is equal to the Father.³⁰⁸ He is mediator between God and men, he is fully God and fully man who is not separated in himself: 'the Word, the soul, and the body are the only Christ'.³⁰⁹ His incarnation in the womb of the Virgin Mary is described with a spousal language as a 'spiritual marriage' of God with mankind. In the unity of Christ, true God and true man, God united himself with the body, and the body, representing all humanity, clung to God.³¹⁰ This Christian doctrine is not put forward abstractly, but as something that can be accessed by the believer thanks to his baptism and the knowledge he received with the baptism and its exposition. Christ's Incarnation happened 'for us' (*pro nobis*),³¹¹ and therefore for every believer; it is an inheritance that does not cease.

Also the Holy Spirit is presented as equal to the Father and the Son, however, again, not in an abstract way but a concrete connection with other articles of faith, namely the belief in the remission of sins: 'We recognise that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the remission of all sins'.³¹² If one of the effects of baptism is the remission of sins performed by the Holy Spirit, it is not possible to accept either the Arian doctrine on a lesser rank of the Holy Spirit, nor their practice to baptise anew those who have been baptised earlier in the Catholic Church.³¹³

The entire exposition on the creed culminates, as in others of Quodvultdeus's sermons, with the article on the 'Catholic Church'. Only in her is there truth and salvation, as she belongs inseparably to Christ who is 'Head and body, Christ and the Church'.³¹⁴ Although the Catholic Church might be a minority, 'she is not somewhere in the corner, for she is entire everywhere'.³¹⁵ All the articles are necessary to come to the resurrection and eternal life, and that is the reason why Quodvultdeus warns again against the snares of the devil.³¹⁶ The bishop makes a sharp contrast between the faith in its entirety kept by the

³⁰⁷ CIPA 5. 1f. (CCL 60: 232).

³⁰⁸ CIPA 6–8 (CCL 60: 233–237).

³⁰⁹ CIPA 9. 2 (CCL 60: 238): *Verbum, anima et caro unus Christus*.

³¹⁰ CIPA 9. 9 (CCL 60: 239).

³¹¹ CIPA 9. 2 (CCL 60: 238).

³¹² CIPA 19. 5 (CCL 60: 254).

³¹³ CIPA 19. 3, 5f. (CCL 60: 254f.).

³¹⁴ CIPA 22. 1 (CCL 60: 256): *Christus ex toto se, ex capite et ex corpore*.

³¹⁵ CIPA 20. 1 (CCL 60: 255): *Non enim in angulo est, sed ubique tota est*.

³¹⁶ CIPA 20. 3–4 (CCL 60: 256).

Church and its defects represented by the heresies. In fact, his discourse is similar to that of ancient catechesis regarding the two ways, one leading to life, the other to death.³¹⁷ If the way leading to life is the 'whole Christ', then no one other than the Church and who belongs to her can be recognised by Christ as his spouse, as he does not call God his Father.³¹⁸ That is why Quodvultdeus does not forget to depict in full colours the goal to which the Christian is going towards with hope, in order to move the hearts of listeners to set their start on this journey:

My brothers, we are going to come there and we shall see what an eye here could not have seen ... What a joy will that be in the moment you will see that you have become a companion of angels, that you take part in the heavenly kingdom, that you reign together with the King, that you own everything without any concupiscence, that you are rich without any avarice, that you reign without money, that you judge without any successor, that you reign without fear from the barbarians, that you live, without death, your eternal life!³¹⁹

The fear of the barbarians points towards another layer of the sermon: the reader senses a shadow of immediate danger from a foreign nation that endangers not only the Roman way of life, but also their faith. The exposition on the creed is pervaded by polemics against the pagans, the Jews, and the Arians, where even lengthy quotes taken from pagan poets are used. For this reason, the sermon gained its misleading title. A.V. Nazzaro speaks about a collection of biblical testimonies used to 'refute the opinions of the Jews',³²⁰ but given the author's intention and the sermon's structure, such an explanation would not be enough. The polemical passages that depict Arians and Jews as 'enemies' underline the bishop's tense effort to make anything possible, so that the newly baptised would not lose their faith and allegiance to the Catholic Church. We do not find here explicit anti-pagan passages, but a part of the witnesses addressed to the Jews are quotations from pagan poets, especially from Virgil's *Bucolics*³²¹

317 CIPA 21. 1–3 (CCL 60: 256).

318 CIPA 22. 6–9 (CCL 60: 258).

319 CIPA 21. 4–5 (CCL 60: 256): *Veniemus illuc, fratres mei, et ibi uidebimus quod oculus hic non uidit, ibi audiemus quod auris hic non audiuit ... Quale gaudium erit cum te uideris socium esse angelorum, participem regni caelorum, regnare cum rege, nihil concupiscendo omnia possidere, sine auaritia diuitem, sine pecunia administrantem, sine successore iudicantem, sine metu barbarorum regnantem, sine morte in aeterna uita uiuentem?*

320 Nazzaro, 'La produzione omiletica', 38.

321 CIPA 15. 4 (CCL 60: 247). Quodvultdeus's approach to the fourth *Bucolic* in comparison

and from the *Sybilline Oracles*.³²² It is these testimonies which could have misled some of the copyists to entitle the sermon with its present title.

Nonetheless, it has to be admitted that the polemics regarding anti-Catholic groups is quite extensive.³²³ The anti-Jewish polemics especially is substantial and it exceeds the passages devoted to the articles of faith. Quodvultdeus, however, desires to show to the *competentes* the radical difference between the time before their baptism, when they lived 'in the night', in the devil's power, and the time after their baptism when they are going to have their inheritance in God the Father and would live 'in the day'. This life 'in the day' is imaginable, for Quodvultdeus, only in the womb of the 'Mother Church' and the bishop is not sparing with words that should have discouraged his listeners to go again to the amphitheatre to watch the spectacles or to cling to some heretical opinions, such as those of the Manichaeans, Arians, and Jews. The treatise on the errors of the heretics points to his understanding that these defects of the faith prevent the believer from accessing the mystery of Christ in the full sense and deprives the received sacrament of baptism of its full meaning.

The abovementioned quotes from Virgil and Sibyl in CIPA, related to the suffering of Christ already by Lactantius,³²⁴ interconnect the argumentation of CIPA with that found in *Liber promissionum*³²⁵ and they represent one of the internal proofs of the same authorship of CIPA and L. The author of CIPA acknowledges that he would like to gather all available testimonies on Christ present in the Law and in the Prophets: it is only time that prevents him from doing so.³²⁶ *Liber promissionum* is just such a collection of christological testimonies present in the Old Testament. It seems plausible that it was only in exile that the author found time to compose it, when he was not burdened anymore by everyday worries of the episcopal office of the African capital. The inspirational sources for the doctrine present in CIPA can be found quite easily: the doctrine on the Trinity, that on the 'whole Christ' (*Christus totus*), his view on the inheritance of sin, and the theology of Christ the Way are all strongly

with other Christian writers is studied by Pierre Courcelle, 'Les exégèses chrétiennes de la quatrième Églogue', REA 59/3 (1957), 294–319.

322 *Or. Syb.* 8. 217 ff. in CIPA 16. 3 (CCL 60: 248f.) and *Or. Syb.* 8. 287 ff. in CIPA 16. 6 (CCL 60: 249f.); see Lact. *div. inst.* 6. 15. 11; 6. 20. 5; 4. 18 ff. (CSEL 19: 646, 648, 352); Aug. *ciu.* 18. 23 (CCL 48: 613f.).

323 CIPA 6. 5–8. 5; 11–18. 14; 19. 2–7; 22. 3–14.

324 See Lact. *div. inst.* 4. 18–19 (CSEL 19: 352–363).

325 R. Braun in CCL 60: 582f., 586.

326 CIPA 13. 10 (CCL 60: 244).

inspired by Augustine. In Augustine, we would also find the idea of spiritual marriage between God and the humanity and between Christ and the Church; in the baptismal context, the inspiration seems to be Ambrose.³²⁷



After Quodvultdeus was sent into exile in spring 440, the See of Carthage was vacant for fourteen years; only then, and just for a brief time, did Geiseric allow Deogratias to be consecrated bishop of Carthage in 454.³²⁸ Because of Geiseric's ban on Catholic bishops, Carthage had to wait until 478/79 when the city received Eugenius who served his Church until c. 505.³²⁹ But because of these prolonged gaps, it is doubtful that the baptismal tradition of Carthage was preserved until then. Quodvultdeus is therefore probably the last bishop to perform it and he is the last one to give any witness on their behalf.³³⁰ With him, an important chapter of African liturgical tradition closed and even though there still were Catholic Christians in Africa after that date, the baptismal tradition would have been less vibrant and probably also influenced by other local and perhaps also overseas liturgical traditions.

Where we have encountered Quodvultdeus as an heir of Augustine's theology, at the same time noticeable differences between the curricula of the baptismal preparation can be noticed. It would be a mistake to interpolate the parts of the baptismal instruction that are missing in works of one or another bishop with the fragments found in the oeuvre of yet another. Renouncing the possibility to fill in the gaps in this manner, it is also much more difficult to interpret the sequence of the rites in both cities. It is most noticeable in the rites of the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli*, where we can grasp the theological meaning Augustine and Quodvultdeus gave to these celebrations rather than their actual procedure. Where the rites of the *redditio symboli* and the *traditio orationis* can be well documented from Augustine's corpus, there is no trace of the latter rite in Quodvultdeus's sermons that do not allow us to assert the existence of the former ritual in his Church of Carthage either. There are only flickers of elements of some baptismal rites in Quodvultdeus's Carthage that emerge from the graphic theological description of the meaning of the baptism in the bishop's discourses. Notwithstanding, the general framework of the

327 Ambr. *expos. ps. CXVIII* 1. 16 f. (SAEMO 9: 78–80).

328 Vict. Vit. 1. 24–27 (ed. Lancel 107–109).

329 Vict. Vit. 2 and 3; Whelan, *Being Christian*, 48.

330 Saxer, *Rites*, 414.

baptismal preparation seems to be the same, with a period of the catechuminate and the rite of the *signatio*, followed by intense training in the last weeks before the candidates' baptism.

The differences between the practices in Augustine's Hippo and Quodvultdeus's Carthage in the baptismal preparation allow us to even hypothesise about a great variety in the process of the preparation of the *competentes* even in the local liturgical traditions in Africa. The fact that Quodvultdeus reworks and develops theological topics taken from the previous African theological tradition, and especially from Augustine, and re-utilises them in the context of a different liturgical setting, would hint at Quodvultdeus's openness in enriching local liturgical and catechetical tradition with the concepts he appropriated from his theological study. In other works, Quodvultdeus seems not to copy Augustine's institutions and not enforce the practice of his close friend and master to his own church. This can be seen already as a sign of independence and creativity of a representing of the post-Augustinian generation.

Quodvultdeus's Baptismal Theology

We do not know anything precise about the baptismal rites in Quodvultdeus's Carthage and the sermons attributed to the bishop do not speak about its procedure. His catecheses remain silent, similar to Augustine who does the same in his *Confessiones*. We cannot even be sure whether the Easter Vigil was the only date for baptism, but, like elsewhere, it was already the preferred one by the third century in Africa and elsewhere.¹ Nonetheless, as we have shown, Quodvultdeus's pre-baptismal catecheses contain and preach his theology of baptism right from the sermon *De cantico novo* to those entitled *De ultima quarta feria* (UQF) and *De cataclysmo* (C). This makes much sense, as all the baptismal preparation, including the pre-baptismal rites of scrutinies, exorcisms, etc., developed the same baptismal rites and Quodvultdeus's theology of baptism remains coherent. It seems that the baptismal experience would have been too overwhelming if the person being baptised were to have witnessed it all in just a one-night vigil. Various aspects of these baptismal rites developed into independent pre-baptismal rites to make sure that the life change of the new Christian believer—the *conversio*—would be genuine, thorough, and decisive. This proved true especially for the renunciation of the devil and the profession of faith that—most probably, as in other ecclesiastical areas—were part of the baptismal rites.²

Notwithstanding the practice of Hippo and the importance of the rite of *traditio orationis* in the African tradition that might go back to Tertullian's times,³ there is nothing that suggests such a ritual in Quodvultdeus's sermons. Where Augustine's sermons on the Lord's Prayer make a clear connection between the instruction on the creed and that on the prayer,⁴ nothing in Quodvultdeus's catecheses suggests a similar thing.⁵ The existence of such a rite in Carthage

1 Tert. *bapt.* 19. 1; Hipp. *in Dan.* 16 (CCL 1: 293; GCS 1: 27).

2 Nock, *Conversion*, 179 f.

3 Grossi, 'Contesto', 205.

4 Aug. s. 56. 1; 57. 1; 58. 1; 59auct. 1 (CCL 41Aa: 153–227).

5 I mentioned already that according to Morin, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini tractatus*, vi–vii, an (Ps.-)Augustinian sermon *de dominica oratione* (PLS iii. 299–303; CPL 414) 'could be attributed to Quodvultdeus'. Except for the fact that in some passages G. Morin found it found alien to Augustine's thought and that its content is found quite dull, there are not any other motives for Quodvultdean attribution.

cannot be affirmed solely from a supposedly comparable curriculum in Hippo. As with many other particulars of the baptismal course in Carthage, we remain in the dark.

Nonetheless, the sermons preached in the last week before the baptism (UQF; C) allow us to suppose that the baptism itself was practised by immersion. There was unction with chrism that imprinted the character in the baptised person.⁶ The whole process of the Christian initiation was perfected with the celebration of the Eucharist: the neophytes celebrated this sacrament of love for the first time with those who had been baptised before them.⁷ It was only now that they were allowed to participate in the second part of the liturgy, so far guarded by the *disciplina arcani* and could see and taste what this 'delightful feast' was⁸ and to be nourished from the table of their new and eternal King.⁹

1 *De ultima quarta feria*

The sermon that the manuscripts designate *On the last Wednesday* (*De ultima quarta feria*; UQF; CPL 406)¹⁰ was pronounced in proximity to the Easter celebration of the baptism of the addressees. Both R.J. De Simone and A.V. Nazzaro agree that this sermon was pronounced on the Wednesday that immediately preceded Easter.¹¹ This day of the week is, in fact, witnessed only by the *tituli* indicated by the manuscript tradition;¹² the text of the sermon does not point to a specific day, although there is no doubt that the sermon was delivered only a couple of days before the *competentes* would have been baptised. The temper of UQF is to much a degree polemical, as the preacher develops his argumentation against the Arians.¹³ The wartime situation was of the Vandal occupation of at least a part of the North African provinces, as the final appeal for the prayer for the peace and liberation of the land reveals.¹⁴ M. Pignot dates UQF, similarly to other sermons attributed to Quodvultdeus, to the 420s and 430s. In light of the plea to pray for the liberation of the land, I find A.V. Nazzaro's dating to

6 C 1. 4; 2. 3; 4. 5 (CCL 60: 409 f., 413).

7 Saxer, *Rites*, 412.

8 A2 9. 1 (CCL 60: 465): *iocundoque conuiuio*.

9 C 1. 4 (CCL 60: 409).

10 CCL 60: 395–406.

11 De Simone, 279; Nazzaro, '*Contro Giudei*', 531.

12 CCL 60: 395.

13 UQF 6. 22 (CCL 60: 404 f.).

14 UQF 7. 6 (CCL 60: 406).

439 much more plausible.¹⁵ Nevertheless, it is not necessary to set the sermon to the very year of the capture of Carthage: a part of Africa could have been considered occupied by the Vandals from the moment Hippo was captured, or, more likely, when the first treaty between the Romans and Geiseric was concluded in 435.¹⁶ It is also possible that the sermon was delivered after Geiseric's persecution of Catholic bishops, among whom was also Possidius of Calama, began in 437 according to Prosper's *Chronicle*.¹⁷ It is even conceivable that UQF could have been pronounced as late as before Easter 440, after the capture of Carthage. The tense undertone of the sermon speaks for a later date; I suggest the years 437 to 440 as a likely time of the composition of UQF. The structure of UQF can be sketched as follows:

- 1–2 *Exordium*: Farming the spiny ground
 - 1. 1–4 Lord's farming
 - 1. 5–10 Exegesis of Luke 14:19
 - 2 Exegesis of Mark 4
- 3–6 *Narratio*: Power of Christ's blood in the baptism and Eucharist
 - 3–4 Christ's blood
 - 3 Judas and Cain
 - 4 How to receive Christ's blood for the forgiveness of sins
 - 5 Blood and water: baptism and the Eucharist
 - 5. 1–10 Beauty of the Bride-Church
 - 5. 11–21 Peter's denial of Christ
 - 5. 22–26 Peter and the Church recognise the resurrected Christ
 - 6 Unity of the Church
 - 6. 1–4 Unity of the Church in Africa among the heretics
 - 6. 5–14 Preservation of the faith and the Eucharist
 - 6. 14–29 Appeal to the heretics to not divide the body of the Church
- 7 *Peroratio*: Final warnings and appeal to pray for the peace

The opening lines of the sermon develop Paul's metaphor of the Church as the 'Lord's farming'¹⁸ (1 Corinthians 3:6–9): the *competentes* were soon to be made part of this field, once they were baptised:

15 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 189; Nazzaro, 'Contro Giudei', 531.

16 Prosper, *chron.* a. 435 (PL 51: 596).

17 Prosper, *chron.* a. 437 (PL 51: 597).

18 UQF 1. 4 (CCL 60: 395): *dominica agricultura*.

It is necessary to prepare the field of the Church for heavenly grace and spiritual rain because rainfall is near. Let us labour, most beloved, in this field which has been entrusted to us.¹⁹

Such an agricultural allegory was very popular in the African homiletic literature of the fifth century, as it could build upon a two-fold experience of the public: the everyday acquaintance with farming and the familiarity with the pastoral language of the biblical books, especially Isaiah, the Gospels, and Paul's letters.²⁰ The preacher extends the metaphor to his audience by stating that they are the field the Lord desires to cultivate:²¹ during the baptismal preparation, they have been ploughed with the 'wood of the cross' and prepared for the baptismal washing, symbolised by the heavenly rain.²²

Exegesis of the two following parables follows. In the first, Quodvultdeus uses this to develop his idea of ploughing the hard land that was rocky ground full of 'the thorns of bad desires' being that of a man who excused himself from the feast he was invited to because he has bought five yoke of oxen in Luke 14:19.²³ Already, Augustine saw, in a sermon he pronounced in Carthage in the *Basilica restituta*, in the five yoke of oxen a metaphor of the five physical senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste; however, he used this in a negative connotation of those who live for their temporal business and are far away from the faith.²⁴ Quodvultdeus is well aware of this negative interpretation; however, he declares his positive intention to harness this 'five yoke of oxen' not for searching for one's own desires, but for the Lord's field.²⁵ Although the field belongs to the Lord, it is the man who works it in view of a reward to come.²⁶ In this way, human perception is called to be used to help the body and the soul bring their fruit, aided by the 'heavenly dew' of God's grace.²⁷ Every person, and especially the *competens* listening to Quodvultdeus's catechesis, is such a field weeded with thorns that does not accept the seed of God's word easily. This

19 UQF 1. 1 (CCL 60: 395): *Caelesti gratiae et spiritali pluuiiae praeparandus est ager ecclesiae, quia imber diuinus in proximo est. Operemur, dilectissimi, in isto agro quod nobis creditum est.*

20 Isola, *Cristiani*, 107 f.

21 UQF 2. 12 (CCL 60: 397).

22 UQF 2. 11 (CCL 60: 397).

23 UQF 1. 5–10 (CCL 60: 395 f.).

24 Aug. s. 112. 3 (RB 76 [1966]: 46).

25 UQF 1. 6 (CCL 60: 395); see also A1 3. 4 (CCL 60: 442); Isola, *Cristiani*, 120 n. 92.

26 UQF 1. 4, 7 (CCL 60: 395).

27 UQF 1. 10 (CCL 60: 396).

notion is developed by another exegesis, that of the parable of the sower (Mark 4²⁸) applied to every soul that comes to Christ that already opens a theatre for the magnificent mystagogical sermon on the power of Christ's blood that follows for most of the sermon and that will be analysed in Chapter Seven.²⁹ The catechesis closes with a warning against the heretics,³⁰ which is followed by the bishop's appeal to the *baptizandi* to accept the word and not lose the good they expect to gain at their baptism:

You have heard what Christ is and what is the Church, you agreed and confirmed it with shouting. [...] Now even what you are to receive and what you are to become is announced until this very moment by the cry of your voices. We warn you as brothers, we research you as fathers, we urge you as sons: do not lose such a good! Let not Christ's love in your hearts cool down, let not your love towards this Mother [*scil.* the Church] grow insensitive: she gives birth to you, she cares very much about your soul's salvation, she directs your hope, she rescues you daily when you return to her maternal bosom, she prepares for you spiritual food, she desires to bring you to eternal abundance.³¹

The final appeals allow us to consider that this was the last catechesis before the baptism.³² Among various appeals to love Christ or the ministers of the Church and to pray for peace and liberation of the land, there is a request that the candidates pray for 'our reward in that most holy font';³³ a plea similar to that is present also in some other sermons.³⁴ In this way, the *competentes* were finally prepared for the baptism, having been catechised about the core meaning of the sacraments of initiation they were to receive.

28 UQF 2. 1–4 (CCL 60: 396).

29 UQF 3–6 (CCL 60: 397–404).

30 UQF 6. 10–14 (CCL 60: 404).

31 UQF 7. 2–4 (CCL 60: 405 f.): *Quid Christus sit et quid Ecclesia audistis, approbastis, clamastis; ... Nunc etiam quid accepturi estis, uel quid eritis, adhuc in auribus nostris insonat strepitus nostrae uocis: admonemus uos ut fratres, obsecramus ut patres, hortamur ut filios. Nolite perdere tantum bonum. Amor Christi in cordibus uestris non refrigescat; amor matris huius circa uos non torpescat; quae uos parurit, quae curam magnam pro salute uestrae animae gerit, quae spem uestram dirigit, quae cotidie redeuntis materno sinu excipit, quae uobis spiritales cibos praeparat, quae ad aeternam saturitatem perducere desiderat.*

32 UQF 7. 5–7 (CCL 60: 406).

33 UQF 7. 5 (CCL 60: 406): *pro nostra mercede in illo sacratissimo fonte, pro nobis orate.*

34 CN 10. 9–11; SI 1. 2 (CCL 60: 392, 305).

2 *De cataclysmo*

The last of the pre-baptismal sermons that the manuscripts entitle *On the Deluge* (*De cataclysmo*; C; CPL 407)³⁵ is, in fact, also a catechesis on baptism, delivered in the period imminently preceding Easter, as its incipit makes clear.³⁶

Because the day of your redemption is near, accept, most beloved, what instructs you and what nourishes, builds, and strengthens your heart to fear God. Let not this ardour of such a love diminish in your hearts.³⁷

The opening line shows who the primary audience is: the *competentes* who are to be baptised in the coming days. The sermon does not address only the topic of baptism, but it is also an exhortation to persevere in the Christian way of life after their initiation, as 'no one can call himself a Christian if he or she, having been imbued in the mysteries, is reborn from the water and the Spirit and afterwards gives himself to various pleasures'.³⁸ Despite the importance Quodvultdeus gives to the baptism, he is aware that it does not solve all the problems of the present life, as it cannot prevent the soul of the baptised to be tempted by the 'enemy', that is, the devil.³⁹ He, therefore, does not limit himself to expound on Christ's power in baptism but he urges his audience to persevere in their everyday life. In the last part of the sermon, he addresses all groups of the baptised, present at this catechesis together with the *competentes*: he speaks of the 'saints', that is, monks, the 'continent', and the 'married faithful',⁴⁰ as well as about the elderly and the young, the virgins, and the married women.⁴¹ The bishop addresses, consequently, the mixed public of the Church of Carthage, present at the liturgy before Easter.

M. Pignot dates C, similarly to other sermons, to an extended period of the 420s and 430s.⁴² Unlike Pignot, I consider C to be the work of Quodvultdeus who would already be bishop at the time of its composition. What is more,

35 CCL 60: 409–420.

36 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 189.

37 C 1. 1 (CCL 60: 409): *Quoniam in proximo est dies redemptionis uestrae, percipite, dilectissimi, ea quae uos erudiant, atque corda uestra enutrient, erigant, corroborent ad timorem Dei: feruor iste tanti amoris non pigrescat in cordibus uestris.*

38 C 1. 2 (CCL 60: 409): *Nec putet quis tantum esse christianum, quod his imbutus mysteriis renascitur ex aqua et spiritu, et postmodum dimittat se uoluptatibus uariis.*

39 C 1. 2 (CCL 60: 409).

40 C 6. 17 (CCL 60: 419).

41 C 6. 20–24 (CCL 60: 419f.).

42 Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 189.

the Church is presented as victorious over various 'serpent heads' of heresies except for Arianism that seemed already to have been killed but 'now again lifts its head'.⁴³ The bishop also speaks about the world going to ruin and the fear of the barbarians.⁴⁴ For these reasons, I am inclined to set it in the context of the years immediately preceding the capture of Carthage. Because of the harsh anti-Arian rhetoric, I suggest the years 437 to 439 as the time when it was conveyed.

The Christian life after baptism as a struggle with vices is the central theme of the exordium.⁴⁵ The sermon aims to prepare the listeners for their Christian life, yet the main topic of the discourse is a catechesis on baptism, based upon the typology of the passing of the Red Sea and the Paschal Lamb. I propose the following structure of c:

- 1–2 *Exordium*: Christian life after the baptism
- 3 *Narratio*: Baptism
 - 3. 1–9 Effects of baptism
 - 3. 10–3. 24 Typology of Moses and the crossing of the Red Sea
 - 4 Passover of the spiritual Israel and the Paschal Lamb
 - 5 Christ the Lamb defeating all the heresies
 - 6. 1–6 Christ the Shepherd
- 6. 7–26 *Peroratio*: Appeal to climb the steps of the Cross and reach eternal life

The bishop expresses his idea of the Christian life after the baptism with an image of a repaired ship lowered again into the water that has set its course towards the desired port.⁴⁶ In fact, he uses the image in the same way as in cN, delivered at an earlier stage of the baptismal preparation, and it is possible that he just wanted to refresh the memory of his audience.⁴⁷ The baptism endows the person with a new status: 'You have been baptised, you have been signed with a royal character, you started to acquire the subsistence from your King's table.'⁴⁸ Quodvultdeus borrows the sacramental meaning of the 'royal character' from Augustine, who uses it frequently in the baptismal context to

43 C 5. 10 (CCL 60: 415).

44 C 6. 17 (CCL 60: 420).

45 The topic was already traditional in African theology, as we find it as early as in Cypr. *mort.* 4 (CSEL 3/1: 290).

46 C 1. 4–6 (CCL 60: 409).

47 cN 2. 4–8 (CCL 60: 383).

48 C 1. 7 (CCL 60: 409): *Baptizatus es, signatus es regio caractere, coepisti consequi annonam de mensa regis tui.*

express the efficiency of baptism.⁴⁹ But, similarly to his friend and teacher, he does not make it part of the doctrine on the indelible character as later sacramental theology does;⁵⁰ this new status of someone belonging to the King who is nourished both by his word and in the Eucharist⁵¹ can be endangered by the devil who searches for his former possession.⁵² The baptised should, therefore, look for spiritual weaponry to proceed in his struggle to fight against temptations and vices that threaten his life.⁵³ These make up part of the struggle between Christ and the devil and the crown of victory can only be acquired if they do not pay heed to the devil's suggestions, do not visit the spectacles, and stop going to church and strive for good deeds.⁵⁴

After this series of warnings, Quodvultdeus comes to the core of his discourse where he has to explain to his audience what lies behind the common elements of the baptismal rites. First, he discusses the effects of baptism,⁵⁵ moving then to the traditional typology of baptism prefigured in the crossing of the Red Sea and the slaughter of the Paschal Lamb (Exodus 14 and 12–13).⁵⁶ Both typologies are described in more detail in Chapter Seven as part of the treatise on Quodvultdeus's mystagogy, together with the bishop's appeal to Christ the new Moses striking with his staff the heretics.⁵⁷ Finally, Quodvultdeus presents Christ as the Shepherd also of the heretics, as he goes in the search for the lost sheep and wishes to bring all into one sheepfold.⁵⁸

The symbol of Christ's staff—present already in Quodvultdeus's exegesis of the Book of Exodus—connects the previous section with the peroration: with his staff, Christ the new Moses creates four 'steps' of the cross that the believers are called to climb and reach, through their means, heaven.⁵⁹ The four steps of the cross become the four essential attitudes of a Christian that were neces-

49 Aug. *ep.* 88. 9; 108. 2; *Io. eu. tr.* 6. 16; s. 260A. 2; 359. 5; 293A auct. = s. Dolbeau 3. 16; c. *Gaud.* 1. 12. 13 (CSEL 34.2: 415, 614; CCL 36: 62; MA 1: 37; PL 39: 1594; ed. Dolbeau 495; CSEL 53: 207); for Augustine's view on character, see Dassmann, 'Character'.

50 H.-W. Müssing, *Augustins Lehre von der Taufe*, diss. (Hamburg, 1969), 67 n. 253; Cyrille Vogel, *Ordinations inconsistentes et caractère inamissible* (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1978), 113 f.; Dassmann, 'Character', 837.

51 C 1. 1, 7 (CCL 60: 409).

52 C 1. 7 (CCL 60: 409). In fact, according to TB1 8. 13 (CCL 60: 436) the royal character acquired at baptism can be lost also by ceding to the Arian invaders.

53 C 1. 8–10 (CCL 60: 409 f.); Isola, *Cristiani*, 86.

54 C 2. 5–7 (CCL 60: 410).

55 C 3. 1–9 (CCL 60: 409 f.).

56 C 3. 10–4. 15 (CCL 60: 410–414).

57 C 5. 1–37 (CCL 60: 414–418).

58 C 6. 1–4 (CCL 60: 418).

59 C 6. 7–12 (CCL 60: 419 f.).

sary to acquire eternal life: to have his heart lifted up to the Lord, to engage in good deeds, to discipline his body through fasting and other ascetic practices, and to have a faith that surpasses the visible realities.⁶⁰ In the instability of this present world, in a situation of fear of the barbarians but also physical diseases and other kinds of sufferings, the audience is called to strive for the incorruptible world where the worries of this present age cannot touch them.⁶¹ Christ's death, the main topic of the sermon, has set free both men and women⁶² and that is the reason why both old and young, the consecrated, the married, and the virgins are called to pursue the journey towards the 'secure places' where they would live 'with God and from God'.⁶³ The sermon closes then with an appeal for prayer that would become the bishop's nourishment,⁶⁴ not dissimilar to other exhortations to pray for the bishop in other sermons.

60 C 6. 13–16 (CCL 60: 420).

61 C 6. 18 (CCL 60: 420).

62 C 6. 25 (CCL 60: 421).

63 C 6. 17 (CCL 60: 420): *loca tutissima; cum Deo et de Deo uiuent.*

64 C 6. 26 (CCL 60: 420): *saltem uestris orationibus pascar.*

PART 3

***Quodvultdeus's Catechetical
Ministry in the Unpleasant Times***



Introduction to Part 3

Behind the text of the sermons, the personality of the preacher can be glimpsed. Willing or unwilling, the minister, speaking to his audience, reveals something of his personality and intentions. Despite all the rhetorical devices employed to move his public towards the goal he has set for his flock, the sermons cannot be interpreted solely as independent theological treatises or his attempt to strengthen his authority over the people. To see the essential integrity between what the preacher says and what he really thinks or tries to live requires a specific hermeneutics of trust as can be spotted in Augustine's *Confessions* that speak to the reader who understands the author and joins him in the desire to 'do the truth'.¹ The same applies to homiletic literature as such: a preacher expects a kind of sympathy from his audience, hoping that he and the public share a common sphere of understanding. This is theologically based upon sharing one faith and one hope for the life to come.

Quodvultdeus's pre-baptismal catecheses witness to the careful attention this bishop dedicated to the preparation of the new Christians. After the presentation of the baptismal preparation in Africa and especially in Quodvultdeus's sermons (Chapters Three to Six), I am going to show in these final two chapters the bishop's approach towards the catechumens and the *competentes* in relation to the historical and religious situation (Chapters One and Two) of his episcopacy. How does Quodvultdeus work with the desire of the candidates for the new life and for reaching the ultimate destiny of their existence, that is, eternal life? How did he try to foster their allegiance to the Mother Church and how and why does he warn them against the heresies of the age that he believes can seduce them from the right way? In Chapter Seven, I am going to focus on the way Quodvultdeus builds and educates his Church in his pre-baptismal catecheses, and in Chapter Eight I am going to study how he tries to defend and protect her from various non-Catholic groups: heretics, the Jews, and the pagans.

¹ Aug. *conf.* 10. 1. 1; 11. 1. 1 (CCL 27: 155, 164).

Building the Community

For Quodvultdeus, what counts most is the Church, that is, the ‘Catholica’, or the Catholic Church.¹ He loves this ‘holy mother’ and also encourages his listeners to love this mother as her children.² As bishop, he knows his responsibility is to ‘build’ this Church, conceived as ‘God’s house’ where the believers are ‘the living stones which constitute it’.³ He makes an effort to create a communal identity of the new believers and to develop the connection between them and the Mother Church, providing them with ‘the food’ from which God grants them ‘growth’.⁴ That is why I am going to show in the first section his ecclesiology which is the key element in both Quodvultdeus’s identity and his ministry to his people. Following that, I am going to assess the means he uses to build and strengthen the identity of his listeners: the typological exegesis of the Bible and his mystagogical method. Lastly, examples of this rich mystagogical approach in his pre-baptismal catechesis are going to be analysed.

1 Building Baptismal Identity and the Mother Church

Quodvultdeus’s pre-baptismal catecheses aim to build and strengthen the Christian identity of the candidates so that they would become and remain part of the Church even during the adverse situation that could have been foreseen.⁵ A catechumen’s decision to give his name for baptism in the uncertain times of the Vandal invasion would have been already made with the perception that a Catholic baptism could quickly become an obstruction in the person’s future business, civic career, or other social situations. What is more, the transition from someone who was interested in Christianity and decided to enter the catechumenate and the baptised person who was fully integrated into the Catholic Church was a slow process.⁶ Quodvultdeus used this time to prepare his cate-

1 CIPA 20. 1; S3 13. 7; CN 6. 4; A1 11. 1; A2 13. 6 (CCL 60: 255, 363, 387, 450, 470), and similarly *catholica mater* in L 2. 27. 57 (CCL 60: 126).

2 S1 13. 2; S2 12. 10; UQF 7. 4 (CCL 60: 333, 348, 405f.).

3 S2 1. 2 (CCL 60: 335): *Aedificium enim domus Dei, lapides sunt uiui quod estis uos.*

4 S1 1. 2 (CCL 60: 305).

5 S3 1. 1; A1 1. 4 (CCL 60: 349, 441) are echoed also in L 2. 15. 29; 3. 32. 33 (CCL 60: 98, 178).

6 Pignot, ‘Questioning’, 472.

chumens well and the most important topic he tries to present to them is his ecclesiology, namely his perception and love for the Church, a part of which they are going to become.

To build the community of the church, formed from the new Christians as well as of those baptised perhaps years or decades ago, Quodvultdeus tried to share his love for this Church with his audience. If M. Lichner rightly observed that for Quodvultdeus's teacher and friend, Augustine, it was more important to speak to the catechumens about the Church than about Christ, the Trinity, or the sacraments,⁷ then it is also valid about Quodvultdeus's catecheses addressed to the *competentes*: all of these sermons end with a treatise on the Church.⁸ His ecclesiology, well-rooted in the ancient African tradition, marks virtually every passage of these discourses.⁹

The most prominent ecclesiological concept Quodvultdeus uses is that of *mater ecclesia*, 'Mother Church'.¹⁰ To call her 'mother Church',¹¹ he uses 'the Holy Mother Church',¹² 'Mother Catholic Church',¹³ or just 'Mother'.¹⁴ Quodvultdeus declares it unthinkable not to have God as Father as well as the Church as

7 Lichner, *Kontextuálny pohľad*, 62.

8 Pignot, 'Catechuminate', 209.

9 For the African understanding of the Church, see Erich Altendorf, *Einheit und Heiligkeit der Kirche. Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung des altchristlichen Kirchenbegriffs im Abendland von Tertullian bis zu den donatistischen Schriften Augustins* (Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1932); Joseph C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia. An inquiry into the concept of the Church as mother in early Christianity* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1943); Geoffrey G. Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London: SPCK, 1950), 93–112; Joseph Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche* (München: Karl Zink Verlag, 1954), 44–123; Walter Simonis, 'Heilsnotwendigkeit der Kirche und Erbsünde bei Augustinus. Ein dogmengeschichtlicher Beitrag zur Klärung zweier Fragen der gegenwärtigen theologischen Diskussion', *ThPh* 43 (1968), 481–501; Robert F. Evans, *One and Holy: The Church in Latin Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1972); Vittorino Grossi, *Linee di ecclesiologia patristica. Il formarsi della coscienza di Chiesa nei primi sette secoli* (Roma: Borla, 2014).

10 The ecclesiology of the 'Mother Church' can be traced to Tert. *bapt.* 20. 5 (CCL 1: 295) and the concept became very popular with Cyprian and Augustine: B.A. Senger, *Mater Ecclesia. Die Vorstellungen über die Kirche als Mutter von der Antike bis die Karolingerzeit*, PhD diss. (Bonn, 1955); Bradley M. Peper, 'The Development of *Mater Ecclesia* in North African Ecclesiology', PhD Thesis (University of Nashville, 2011); Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 57 f.; Aimable Musoni, *Ecclesia Mater chez Cyprien de Carthage. Signification et portée théologique* (Roma: LAS, 2013).

11 A2 1. 3 (CCL 60: 459): *mater ecclesia*.

12 S1 1. 3; 2. 2; 12. 16; S3 1. 1; 13. 1; CN 10. 1 (CCL 60: 305, 307, 333, 349, 392): *sancta mater ecclesia*.

13 CN 10. 1; A1 8. 13 (CCL 60: 392, 447). Similarly in L 2. 27. 57 (CCL 60: 126): *mater catholica*.

14 S2 12. 10; S3 1. 4; A2 12. 2 (CCL 60: 348 f., 468): *mater*.

Mother.¹⁵ This Church is a 'true' and 'spiritual mother' of her children, that is, of both the baptised believers and of those undergoing baptismal preparation:¹⁶

The last part of this mystery [of the creed] is completed through the church—that mother fertile, virginal, and chaste, spread abroad everywhere, who bears spiritual children for God, who nourishes infants spiritually with the milk of his words, who teaches the old prudence, and who makes the more advanced in age venerable ...¹⁷

At the same time, the Church is both Mother and Virgin, where the virginity is a sign of her purity and relationship to her Bride, Christ,¹⁸ who is 'the fertility of his mother'.¹⁹ Quodvultdeus develops this idea of the virginal motherhood of the Church in view of Augustine's imagery of the catechumenate as time in the womb. The Church, being the virginal mother, does not cease to bear her children or members 'every day'.²⁰ The catechumens and *competentes* are already conceived in her womb as 'seeds' or 'foetuses'.²¹ At baptism, the neophytes come from the font as from the womb of the Mother Church and are reborn.²² Also, this birth is described as virginal: everyone has been born from the Church who has kept the integrity of her teaching and way of life.²³ However, the members are even after their birth nourished with spiritual food throughout their Christian life.²⁴ They are given 'the milk of words', that is, the biblical readings and the sermons,²⁵ and they feed themselves with Christ's body at the Eucharist where they also become themselves, inside the Church and as Church, what they receive, namely the Body of Christ.²⁶

15 S3 13. 1 (CCL 60: 363).

16 CIPA 22. 3, 14; S3 1. 1–2; 13. 2 (CCL 60: 257 f., 349, 363).

17 S2 12. 7–8 (CCL 60: 348; tr. Finn 65): *Ideo sacramenti huius conclusio per ecclesiam terminatur, quia ipsa est mater fecunda, integra et casta, ubique diffusa, quae filios deo spiritaliter parit, quae paruulos lacte uerborum eius spiritaliter nutrit, quae pueros sapientiam docet, quae adolescentes a luxuria atque impudicitia sua sancta castitate custodit ...*

18 S1 6. 4; 13. 1; S2 4. 28; CIPA 22. 3; L 2. 15. 29 (CCL 60: 320, 333, 341, 257, 98).

19 A1 16. 3 (CCL 60: 455): *fecunditas matris*.

20 S1 6. 12; 13. 1; S2 4. 28; UQF 7. 3 (CCL 60: 321, 333, 341, 405). For the early birthing metaphors of baptism, see Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 147–149.

21 CN 10. 1 (CCL 60: 392): *germina*.

22 Robin M. Jensen, 'Mater Ecclesia and Fons Aeterna', in *A Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature*, ed. A.-J. Levine and M. Mayo Robbins (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 153.

23 A2 12. 4 (CCL 60: 468).

24 S1 1. 3 (CCL 60: 305).

25 S2 12. 7 (CCL 60: 348).

26 UQF 7. 3 (CCL 60: 405).

The Church is also a spouse of Christ:²⁷ using spousal language, Quodvultdeus expresses the Church's close and intimate relationship with Christ:

Oh, the great mystery of the marriage! How great this mystery of the Bridegroom and bride! Human words are not up to explaining it. From the Bridegroom, the bride is born. As she is born, she is immediately united to him. At the very moment her husband dies, the bride marries him. At the moment he is joined to his bride, he is severed from mortals. At the moment he is raised above the heavens, she is made fruitful throughout the whole earth.²⁸

Christ's death has cleansed his bride spotless and his blood has become her dowry: everything that was his belongs now also to her.²⁹ In the question of the origin of the Church's union with Christ, Quodvultdeus differs from Augustine who located the marriage of Christ and Church to the Incarnation with Mary's womb as the wedding chamber. Instead, he places the marital union of Church and Christ at the moment when they were separated: Christ's death on the cross.³⁰ Quodvultdeus makes this moment a cardinal point of the history of salvation.³¹ This does not involve only the Church as a whole, but also the individual baptised believers. In virtue of the blood and water from the side of Christ—interpreted in Antiquity as the 'twin sacraments' of the Church, that is, baptism and the Eucharist³²—individual souls together constitute the Church as spouse, betrothed to Christ.³³ This spouse is beautiful, and in baptism the neophytes receive the same beauty and dignity that the Church has.³⁴ What is more, as part of the Church-bride, they share in this spousal union with Christ to whom they, together with all the Church, desire to

27 S1 6. 9; 12. 11; S3 13. 2; UQF 5. 2, 13 (CCL 60: 321, 333, 363, 400f.).

28 S1 6. 10–11 (CCL 60: 321; tr. Finn 37): *O magnum sacramentum huius coniugii! O quam magnum mysterium huius sponsi et huius sponsae! non explicabitur digne humanis uerbis. De sponso sponsa nascitur; et ut nascitur, statim illi coniungitur; et tunc sponsa nubit, quando sponsus moritur; et tunc ille sponsae coniungitur, quando a mortalibus separatur; quando ille super caelos exaltatur, tunc ista in omni terra fecundatur.*

29 S3 13. 2, 4 (CCL 60: 363).

30 The figure of the Church is Eve, made from the side of the sleeping Adam: S1 6. 4 (CCL 60: 320); Peper, 212.

31 UQF 5. 22 (CCL 60: 402).

32 S1 6. 5; C 4. 9 (CCL 60: 320, 413).

33 UQF 5. 2 (CCL 60: 400). For baptism as spiritual marriage, see, for example, Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 198–200.

34 UQF 5. 2, 5–6, 13 (CCL 60: 400f.).

remain faithful.³⁵ The visible sign of this spousal union with Christ is present, according to Quodvultdeus, in the consecrated virgins who become spiritually fertile by their faith when they bear spiritual children without losing their integrity, having been prepared for their Bridegroom.³⁶ In this way, the Church is for Quodvultdeus also more 'tangible' in her members than in Augustine; in this, the bishop of Carthage seems to be more reminiscent of his predecessor Cyprian.³⁷

The Church is also Queen;³⁸ Quodvultdeus bases this appellation on a typological reading of Psalm 44:9 Vulg.: *The queen stood by your right hand, clothed in golden robe, surrounded by diverse colours*, that he interprets as the variety of languages of all the world where the Church is present.³⁹ Christ the Bridegroom crowns her with his royal dignity on the cross,⁴⁰ where she receives his Kingdom in dowry and becomes a 'newly wedded' and 'heavenly queen', as her origin is not human, but rooted in God.⁴¹ The wound in the side of Christ becomes for this Church-queen a window through which she watches her King on the cross.⁴² The queen is the only one, the 'Catholic' one, that has been purified by the King and spread throughout the world.⁴³ The *competentes* are part of her, as she is not limited to one corner of the earth but is everywhere.⁴⁴ In fact, when they will join the union of the Church with Christ in their baptism, they will also become queens, as they will share in the royal dignity bestowed on her spouse by Christ.⁴⁵

Building upon these characteristics of the Church, Quodvultdeus makes a close parallel between the Church and the Virgin Mary who brought forth the new offspring and became the mother of the Lord.⁴⁶

35 A2 13. 2 (CCL 60: 469). Such a notion had been developed already by Ambrose, who speaks of *anima ecclesiastica*: Giorgio Maschio, *La figura di Cristo nel Commento al Salmo n8 di Ambrogio di Milano* (SEA 88; Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2003), 195 f.

36 S3 4. 20; A1 6. 4 (CCL 60: 355, 449).

37 S3 13. 2 (CCL 60: 363); Peper, 212.

38 A2 8. 5 (CCL 60: 465).

39 UQF 5. 4 (CCL 60: 400): *regina quae astitit a dextris tuis in uestitu deaurato, circumamicta uarietate*.

40 CIPA 22. 4 (CCL 60: 257).

41 S3 13. 7; A2 10. 1; 13. 5 (CCL 10: 363, 466, 470).

42 A2 8. 1 (CCL 60: 464 f.).

43 S3 13. 7; CN 6. 4; A1 11. 1 (CCL 60: 363, 389, 450).

44 CN 10. 1; CIPA 20. 1 (CCL 60: 392, 255).

45 A2 9. 8 (CCL 60: 466).

46 A116. 5; CIPA 14. 7 (CCL 60: 455, 245). Isola, 'Mariologia comunitaria' inserts Quodvultdeus's mariology in the context of the homiletics under the Vandals' rule.

He (scil. Christ) is he who offers fertility to the mother, but does not take the virginity. What he conferred on his mother, this he has given his spouse.⁴⁷

For patristic exegesis, Mary is a figure (*figura*) of the Church: as Mary bore the Son and remained a virgin, so the Church bears every time her members, without losing her virginity.⁴⁸ As Mary is mother and virgin, so is the Church; as she is fertile, so is also the Church.⁴⁹ What has been foretold in the Scriptures about the Mother of the Lord is, therefore, also true about the Church. Besides, this parallel involves the individual believers who were born of the Church, as they are also called to imitate Mary as a model of the Church and mother of the 'Head' of the body and their Spouse, Christ.⁵⁰

The spousal and royal character of the Church prefigured in Mary lays down the theological ground for her unity and uniqueness, as there can be only one true and legitimate spouse of Christ and only one wife who knows her husband.⁵¹ There is only one Christ, formed from the Head and the body who is the Church that cannot be separated from the Head.⁵² Mary is the mother of the Head⁵³ and typologically prefigures the motherhood of the Church who bears her members. This Church is being changed into a perfect man, in fact, she is one with Christ, who is both *sponsus* and *sponsa*, husband and wife.⁵⁴ Quodvultdeus here follows Augustine's doctrine on the whole Christ (*totus Christus*), present both in the head and in the body, that form together one Christ. And it is also the foundation of the exclusivity of the Church and the necessity of being part of the Church (and of Christ) to have the possibility of being saved.⁵⁵ This is also why the baptised do not only identify themselves with the Church as an institution, but they become one body and one voice.⁵⁶

47 S2 4. 27 (CCL 60: 341; tr. Finn 57): *qui attulit matri fecunditatem, sed non abstulit integritatem. Quod contulit matri suae, hoc donavit et sponsae suae.*

48 S3 1. 6 (CCL 60: 355).

49 S1 2. 13; 5. 20; S3 4. 7; A1 16. 5 (CCL 60: 308, 319, 354, 455). Both Mary and the Church are prefigured in Eve and mother Zion: S3 1. 4; S1 5. 5 (CCL 60: 349, 317); see also Peper, 212. For the typology of Mary, the new Eve, in patristics, see Albert Schäffner, *Maria, die neue Eva* (München: Don Bosco Verlag, 1981); in the Latin Fathers, see D.B. Capelle, 'Le thème de la nouvelle Ève chez les anciens docteurs latins', *BSFEM* 12 (1954), 9–34.

50 S3 4. 22; C 6. 22 (CCL 60: 355, 419).

51 CIPA 22. 4–5; S3 13. 5 (CCL 60: 257, 363).

52 CIPA 22. 2 (CCL 60: 256).

53 S3 4. 22 (CCL 60: 355).

54 S1 12. 11; A1 16. 3 (CCL 60: 333, 455).

55 CIPA 22. 1–3 (CCL 60: 236f.). Also, this idea can be traced back to Cyprian: *unit. eccl.* 23; *epp.* 31. 1; 41. 2; 42; 43. 7, etc. (CSEL 3/1: 231; 3/2: 557, 588–590, 596).

56 A1 3. 1 (CCL 60: 442). For Augustine's concept of the Church as one heart, see Possidius, v.

This is the image of the Church Quodvultdeus has and shares with his audience, teaching them to love the Church as their mother.⁵⁷ The motherhood, virginity, and the unity of the Church, the body of Christ, also expressed with spousal language, colours also Quodvultdeus's argumentation against various dangers that might avail upon the Church and on the single souls of his believers, and his polemics regarding heresies has to be seen through the prism of his ecclesiology.

2 Typology and Mystagogy

Quodvultdeus's conception of the Church is very firmly rooted in his reading of Scripture. He knows the Bible very well and uses it regularly in his discourses, as the extensive index of R. Braun's *Corpus Christianorum* edition may attest.⁵⁸ The privileged path of the knowledge of the mystery of God is the spiritual exegesis of Scripture: the truth of the Gospel is available only to those who are able to surpass over the literal meaning and see the hidden layer of the spiritual meaning, the Christological and ecclesiological one.

The other way that introduces the believer to the mystery is through the sacramental signs. Baptismal conversion does not consist only of a decisive change in the moral life of the neophyte, but it also provides the believer with a capacity to contemplate the invisible realities hidden beyond the visible signs and appearances. To help them in this effort, it is the purpose of Quodvultdeus's pre-baptismal catecheses to introduce the candidates into the meaning of the (pre-)baptismal rites and to make them understand what a baptismal conversion really means in their lives.

To achieve that aim, Quodvultdeus frequently uses two methods that relate to the liturgical and biblical context of his discourses: mystagogy and typology.

2.1 *Mystagogy*

Today, mystagogy is understood as Christian catechesis on the sacraments, especially the sacraments of Christian initiation, and the explanation of baptismal rites.⁵⁹ In Antiquity, mystagogy had a much broader and richer meaning.

Aug. 5. 1 (LCPM 45: 152); *Aug. b. coniug.* 18. 21 (CSEL 41: 214); *reg.* 3. 1. 2 (ed. Verheijssen 417); Berrouard, 'Revenez'; Pellegrino, "Sursum cor!", 147–174.

57 UQF 7. 4 (CCL 60: 405 f.).

58 CCL 60: 520–580.

59 Enrico Mazza, *Mystagogy* (New York, NY: Pueblo, 1988), 1; Pierre-Marie Gy, 'La notion chrétienne d'initiation. Jalons pour une enquête', MD 132 (1977), 43–52; Id., *La catechesi*

In the context of mystery religions, mystagogy (μυσταγωγία) was meant as an introduction or ritual consecration in these rites.⁶⁰ Such an initiation represents a threshold in the life of man where he leaves behind his past, the old man, to become a new man who is reborn and able to observe reality in a new space or horizon. In such a way, the initiated person becomes part of an 'inner circle', distinct from those 'outside' and has access to knowledge that he seeks and which is not available to the non-initiated.⁶¹

In the milieu of this ancient Mediterranean culture, the Church developed a curriculum of baptismal preparation, accompanied by a mystagogical catechesis and the use of terminology that originally belonged to the mystery rites.⁶² This type of catechesis was not only a theological treatise on the sacraments, such as Tertullian's *De baptismo*, and it was more than a description of liturgical rites. It was more a way to introduce the candidates into the mystery of Christ that had been revealing itself in many ways in the course of the history of salvation and that can be discovered under various signs that are called 'sacraments' (in the wide sense) and which reveal the unitary salvific action of God.⁶³

Although the personal aspect is essential for the mystagogical method, it also involves the rite and its meaning it describes. As E. Mazza has shown, it proves difficult to formulate a general theory of what mystagogy as theological method means. In a very vague way, he defines mystagogy as 'typology applied to the liturgy' and a 'way of constructing a theology of the sacraments'.⁶⁴ In Quodvultdeus's discourses, we find examples of such typological exegesis applied to the liturgical rites that lead to a deeper theological understanding of what the *competentes* had celebrated or were to celebrate in their baptism.

At the same time, though, it can also relate to the realities accessible to the believers because of the sacraments or in the sacramental context. For instance, as baptism opens to the believer the central mysteries of faith, the mystagogy introduces the audience to these realities connected to the faith that

battesimale agli inizi del v secolo (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1993), 137–140; Francesco Cacucci, *La mistagogia. Una scelta pastorale* (Bologna: EDB, 2006).

60 F. Graf, 'Initiation', in *NP* 5 (1998), 1001–1002.

61 Alberto Viciano Vives, 'Il cristianesimo primitivo fu uno dei culti misterici dell'antichità?', in *Pagani e cristiani alla ricerca della salvezza (secoli I–III). XXXIV Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana, Roma, 5–7 maggio 2005* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2006), 740.

62 For a comparison of the Christian catechumenate and mystery religions, see Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 52–54.

63 Gy, 'Notion chrétienne', 40. For an outlook on the mystagogical method in Antiquity, see Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 54–63.

64 Mazza, 165–167.

are accessible to the baptised. As the faith in God's action that surpasses the visible world is necessary for baptism, catechesis on the invisible realities visible with the eyes of faith can also be called 'mystagogical', as it has its baptismal context. The same would also apply for the typologies applied to the Church, as the believers become members in their full right at their baptism. In this sense, some passages of the pre-baptismal catecheses treated in Part Two were indicated as mystagogical in this wider sense, as they are related to baptism. Such a mystagogy is still 'a theology applied to the sacraments', as Mazza defines it, but not necessarily applied to the sacrament understood as a liturgical rite, but rather a 'sacrament' or 'mystery' in its more general meaning, as Quodvultdeus conceives it. The mystagogy can be understood as an introduction into the 'sacraments' or the 'mystery' of Christ, which is the scope of the bishop's pre-baptismal catecheses.

2.2 *Biblical and Liturgical Typology*

Quodvultdeus uses the terms *sacramentum* and *mysterium* to describe the history of salvation present behind the ordinary reality, to which he wants to introduce his audience. Both of them are part of the typological exegesis he employs in the course of his pre-baptismal catecheses. What is the meaning of these expressions and how does this typology work?

It seems that the 'mysteries' point more to what happens in the person who receives the 'sacrament', for example, to the neophytes during the imbuing with baptismal water.⁶⁵ However, in most instances, both terms stand for what stays hidden behind the rite or the biblical text that reveals, somehow, the invisible God's action throughout history and which is accessible to the believers' 'eyes of faith'.⁶⁶

In other instances, both terms seem to be synonymous and Quodvultdeus applies them primarily to his typological exegesis of the Scriptures. Like other Church Fathers, Quodvultdeus is convinced that 'the divine scripture speaks in mystical figures, respecting temporal realities, on which, once recalled, [Scripture] sheds light by means of truth made clear'.⁶⁷ On the pages of the biblical books, 'the mystery' is hidden, and the figures point towards truth to be fulfilled and made clear in the New Testament and in the time of the Church.⁶⁸

65 C 1. 2 (CCL 60: 409).

66 S3 2. 6; A1 9. 2; 18. 1 (CCL 60: 351, 448, 456).

67 S3 3. 12 (CCL 60: 353; tr. Finn 71f.): *Mysticis enim figuris loquitur diuina Scriptura, seruans rebus tempora, quibus recognitis manifesta exerceat ueritate.*

68 The same is demonstrated throughout the course of the whole of L.

In this type of Patristic exposition, the Old Testament prefigurations⁶⁹ (*figura, typus, imago, or similitudo*) point towards the New Testament *veritas* (truth or reality).⁷⁰ However, at the same time, the New Testament realities are somehow present already in the Old Testaments ones, as it is Christ and his power who are active in the Old Testament events and that make them efficient. David leaping before the Ark acted 'mystically' and 'in the great mystery', as the episode contains the 'great sacrament' of the Lord's Passion.⁷¹ This 'great sacrament' is also prefigured in Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac.⁷² The mystical marriage of Christ and the Church is called both 'great sacrament' and 'great mystery'.⁷³ Both terms depict not Christ's crucifixion itself, but what God did behind the visible reality and what is accessible to the believer who takes part in the spousal relationship of the spouses.

Quodvultdeus gives a most excellent example of the allegorical method presented already by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:3–4: the rock struck by Moses in Mount Horeb (Exodus 17:6; Psalm 77:20) is interpreted as Christ, from which people can be truly nourished.⁷⁴ The 'mystery' describes the true reality revealed in the New Testament and which is accessible also and only to the Church. However, the New Testament passages and Christ's action also can contain a 'mystery', a hidden truth available to a spiritual reader. Recalling Christ's attitude in front of the denial of Peter and the thief redeemed on the cross, Quodvultdeus notices that Christ 'who paid the ransom' for both 'enacted a mystery, showing in Peter that no one ought to presume anything just in himself, and in the thief that no impious person need perish'.⁷⁵ The 'mystery' is then the salvific power of Christ's death on the cross, able to redeem anyone: this is the core of the Christian message, to which the *competentes* have access through baptism, that is, the sacraments of the Church.⁷⁶

The 'sacrament' can also express the same concept of the prefigured reality present in the Old Testament books and realised in the New Testament. An

69 1 Corinthians 10: 2; C 4. 1 (CCL 80: 413).

70 C 4. 1 (CCL 60: 412 f.). For an exposition on the various typological terms, I suggest Giampietro Francesconi, *Storia e simbolo. Misterium in figura: la simbolica storico-sacramentale nel linguaggio e nella teologia di Ambrogio di Milano* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1981).

71 A1 19. 4–7; A2 5. 4; 8. 3 (CCL 60: 457 f., 462, 465): *magnum sacramentum*.

72 QVC 6. 6; 7. 7 (CCL 60: 371, 373).

73 S1 6. 10 (CCL 60: 321).

74 S3 3. 13–14 (CCL 60: 353); see L 1. 39. 56 (CCL 60: 69).

75 S1 6. 17–18 (CCL 60: 322; tr. Finn 38): *Agebat mysterium qui fundebat pretium, in Petro demonstrans non in se quemquam iustum debere praesumere: in latrone, nullum impium conuersum posse perire*.

76 The same 'message' is called a *mysterium* in TB2 13. 8 (CCL 60: 485).

example of this can be the twins born of Rebecca, where Esau becomes a figure of the rejected Jews and Jacob of the Christians, the new people preferred by God.⁷⁷ The revelation of God in the burning bush to Moses contains a 'great sacrament' of both the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples at Pentecost, and of the unity of the Trinity.⁷⁸ However, in an analogous way, even the New Testament realities relate to the 'sacraments' celebrated in the Church: the water and the blood from the side of Christ *are*, in a way, baptism and the Eucharist, the 'twin sacraments of the Church'.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, the 'sacrament' can also relate specifically to a liturgical rite. Quodvultdeus calls this way the rites of the scrutiny,⁸⁰ the creed,⁸¹ baptism,⁸² and the Eucharist,⁸³ but also the other liturgical rites, such as exorcisms, prayers, insufflations, etc.⁸⁴ Again, it is not only the rite itself, but rather its meaning or what God does invisibly through these rites.⁸⁵ Quodvultdeus sticks to Augustine's sacramental perception, using even his famous definition 'The word is brought to the material element, and it becomes a sacrament'⁸⁶ that asserts it is the power of the Word that is active in the rite represented by the element. In this way, the sacraments are the nourishment provided by the Church to the *competentes*, so that they could be reborn and shown to Christ.⁸⁷

To conclude, the 'sacrament' or 'mystery' involves the elements of the Old Testament past, of the New Testament present, and extends through the manifestation to the whole world during the time of the Church and even to the apocalyptic future. God's action in Old and New Testaments and in the Church's present is the same: the *competentes* and the baptised believers encounter the same power of God which they hear of in the Bible: it is in them where God acts today.⁸⁸ The capacity to see the mystery and the sacrament, to see the invisible

77 S1 2. 19–22 (CCL 60: 309); see also L 1. 20. 27–21. 28 (CCL 60: 36 f.).

78 S2 9. 6 (CCL 60: 346).

79 S1 6. 5 (CCL 60: 320).

80 S1 1. 1, 13 (CCL 60: 305 f.).

81 S1 1. 9, 13; 13. 1; S2 1. 1; 12. 7; S3 13. 1 (CCL 60: 306, 334 f., 348, 363).

82 C 1. 2; TB2 6. 2 (CCL 60: 409, 478).

83 UQF 5. 2; C 4. 10 (CCL 60: 400, 413).

84 S3 1. 3 (CCL 60: 305).

85 CIPA 1. 4; S3 1. 3; C 3. 10 (CCL 60: 227, 349, 411).

86 C 3. 3; Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 80. 3 (CCL 60: 411; 36: 529): *Accedit uerbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum.*

87 S3 1. 3 (CCL 60: 349).

88 A1 1. 10 (CCL 60: 441); such a concept is very similar to L 1. 14. 21; 2. 21. 40 (CCL 60: 29, 110).

reality with the eyes of faith is what distinguishes the Church from those 'outside': all those who are under the power of the devil or who do not belong to the Church are not able to see it.⁸⁹

2.3 *Liturgy and Mystagogy*

While it would be immensely interesting to analyse Quodvultdeus's typological method more in depth, the topic of this book focuses rather on the mystagogical aspect of his catechesis. The pre-baptismal catecheses were all delivered during the liturgy, and in some cases also during the liturgical rites that accompanied the baptismal preparation. Not only are they to be interpreted in their liturgical context, but they also involve the liturgical rite in the catechesis, as they explain to the audience its meaning. Quodvultdeus declares his intention to explain this 'meaning' (*ratio*) of the rites at the beginning of some of his discourses on the rites of scrutiny and the *traditio symboli*.⁹⁰ To prepare the candidates for baptism and to help them enter the Church, Quodvultdeus uses the mystagogical method.

Those who listen to him and who are part of the Church—either her children as baptised or still in her womb as *competentes*—are, on the contrary, able to see and be part of this history. The sacraments, the various rites, are the means to involve the audience with the mystery of Christ present behind the visible world: the sacraments are celebrated 'in you', Quodvultdeus affirms.⁹¹ He invites his audience, his 'most beloved', his 'sons' and 'brothers', to see themselves with the eyes of faith the mysteries he presents them.⁹² He tries to involve them in personal dialogue with Christ:

What Christ asks from you is what he says to you: 'What I have done for you, do this also for me; I have laid down my life for you, now lay down your life for your brothers and sisters ... I have shown you death, which you have known about; I have shown you resurrection, which you had not known about.' By believing, love the Risen One that through him you may also rise.⁹³

89 S3 5. 10; UQF 5. 9; 6. 25; A2 4. 3; 9. 4 (CCL 60: 356, 401, 405, 461, 465).

90 CIPA 1. 4; S1 1. 1 (CCL 60: 229, 305).

91 S1 1. 4 (CCL 60: 305): *quod est quid in uobis nocte celebratum est*.

92 CIPA 4. 10; S1 6. 17; 7. 7; S3 5. 12; UQF 7. 1; C 3. 4; A2 8. 7 (CCL 60: 232, 322, 324, 357, 405, 411, 465).

93 S1 6. 25, 27 (CCL 60: 323; tr. Finn 39): *Hoc a te quaerit Christus hoc tibi dicit: Quod feci pro te, hoc et tu fac pro me; animam meam posui pro te, et tu pro fratribus tuis animam tuam pone ... suscepi mortem quam noueras, demonstraui resurrectionem quam ignorabas. Credendo ama resurgentem, ut pro illum et tu resurgas*.

Not only are those who have received the sacramental rites been brought to Christ to be taught from him,⁹⁴ but they also have been made into the 'living stones' of God's house⁹⁵ and they are 'Christ's body and members'.⁹⁶ As such, the mystery of Christ happens in them, they are their subject as they involve themselves with the mysteries they receive. They have to learn the creed, they have to undergo the rituals, including the humiliation on the goatskin and the examination, and they have to renounce personally, and as part of one voice of the Church, the devil, his pomps, and angels.⁹⁷ However, they also have to embrace the Christian way of life: while the sacrament of baptism equips their soul, it does not guard them against the cunning of the devil and they have to keep their fervour for their faith ablaze in their hearts.⁹⁸

This mystagogical method allows Quodvultdeus, in this way, to reach the broad audience present in his sermons. Inserting the lives of the listeners into the course of the history of salvation using the typological and liturgical exegesis of Scripture, he is able to involve people with varied life and faith experience, and people coming from various strata of the society.

3 Mystagogy of the Scrutiny and the *traditio symboli*

A magnificent example of Quodvultdeus's use of the mystagogical method is provided by CIPA 1 where he delivers a catechesis on the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli* based upon the exegesis of Romans 13:12 applied to the conversion of the audience:

The night is nearly over, daylight is on the way; so let us throw off everything that belongs to the darkness and equip ourselves for the light. Having driven away the gloom of night and having fled the darkness of sins, let the ray of the true light shine in your hearts.⁹⁹

The *competentes* had been subject to the darkness of evil and sin, but now their inner selves were illuminated by the grace of God. At the same time, they have

94 A1 1. 6–10 (CCL 60: 441).

95 S2 1. 2 (CCL 60: 335).

96 S3 9. 7 (CCL 60: 361).

97 A1 2. 4 (CCL 60: 442).

98 C 1. 1–3 (CCL 60: 409).

99 CIPA 1. 3 (CCL 60: 227): *Nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit; deponentes opera tenebrarum induite uos arma lucis. Expulsa itaque noctis caligine effugatisque tenebris peccatorum, radius ueri luminis fulgeat in cordibus uestris.*

been freed from sin, and they have the liberty to 'lay aside the acts of darkness and to put on the arms of light'.¹⁰⁰ It is his duty as the bishop to help his people in this transition from the darkness to the light when he reveals his intention to show the real meaning of the rites (*ratio sacramentorum*) that were celebrated the previous night and to demonstrate that these rites bring his *competentes* to salvation:

The reason why such a large assembly has gathered requires of us both to provide an explanation of last night and to show the true and eternal salvation coming from such a perceived sacrament.¹⁰¹

To the 'sacrament', or to the rites celebrated the previous night, Quodvultdeus applies the words of Romans 13:12: 'during the night, we were not doing the acts of night but those of day'.¹⁰² The rite has brought about a crucial change in the lives of the *competentes*: with the scrutiny, the devil, who had governed their lives so far, was forced to flee so that Christ might enter:

We stayed awake, we prayed, we sang Psalms, we fought against our enemy, the devil, and we could sense that a great light was poured into our hearts: during the night we were doing acts of the day.¹⁰³

However, Quodvultdeus does not stop there, he applies the biblical verse also to the meaning of the celebrated rite and to the whole process of conversion that accompanied it, and which could be similarly applied to the baptismal rites. He goes on exemplifying what that means to 'do acts of the day during the night'. However, he does not describe the rites as such, but he instead describes singular effects hidden behind the visible sacrament, and he proposes a theological explanation of what could be perceived with one's spiritual eyesight:

What did we do this night? We chased the devil to flee and we introduced Christ.

What did we do this night? We captured the capturer.

100 Romans 13:12; CIPA 1. 3 (CCL 60: 227): *deponentes opera tenebrarum induite uos arma lucis.*

101 CIPA 1. 4 (CCL 60: 227): *Exigit enim a nobis ratio huius tantae congregationis, et noctis transactae uobis reddere rationem, et istius diei de tanto sacramento percepto ueram sempernamque demonstrare salutem.*

102 CIPA 1. 5 (CCL 60: 227): *inueniemus nos in nocte non opera noctis sed diei peregrisse.*

103 CIPA 1. 7 (CCL 60: 227): *sed uigilando, orando, psallendo, contra aduersarium diabolum dimicando, et magnam lucem infusam cordibus nostris sensimus, et in nocte opera diei peregrimus.*

What did we do this night? We forced the diabolical darkness to flee from your hearts and we showed that it is necessary to let the real light enter in.

What happened this night? The real Strength knocked down the strongman and took away the equipment of his house.

What happened this night? Pride was torn away with its roots and the humility was introduced.

What happened this night? The prince of all vices was forced to flee and the source of every good was accepted.¹⁰⁴

This somewhat lengthy passage demonstrates not only the powerful anaphoric language Quodvultdeus uses, but that they can be applied not only to the scrutinies and the *traditio symboli*, but also to baptism and to Christ's death on the cross. Using the typological reading of the liturgical rite, the rite is connected to the central mystery of Christian faith, to the effects of Christ's sacrifice, and also to its manifestation in Scripture. This is precisely what Quodvultdeus's concept of 'sacrament' encompasses: it describes not only the rite but also its connection with the mystery of Christ: salvation comes from Christ's death on the cross that is applied to the believer in the rite.

This also explains why the rites of the scrutinies and the *traditio symboli* are interconnected with the baptismal rites: their ultimate meaning is, in fact, the same. Both the renunciation of the devil and the profession of the faith made up part of the baptismal rites in various regions of the ancient Church when after renouncing evil, the candidates professed their faith immediately before being immersed in the baptismal font at the Easter Vigil.¹⁰⁵ In fact, being set free from the realm of the devil and of darkness and accepting the reign of Christ and of light is not only the imagery of the rites of the scrutinies, but, primarily, of baptism. This association of the two rites or decisive attitudes seems to be an ancient one and present in various regions of the empire, as Origen, the *Apostolic Tradition*, and others had attested.¹⁰⁶ With Romans 13:12, the bishop

104 CIPA 1. 8–9 (CCL 60: 227 f.): *Quid enim egimus in hac nocte? Diabolum fugauimus et Christum introduximus. Quid egimus in hac nocte? Captiuatorem captiuauimus. Quid egimus in hac nocte? Tenebras diabolicas de cordibus uestris excussimus, lumen uerum hauriendum esse demonstrauius. Quid actum est in hac nocte? Veniens uera fortitudo alligauit fortem, ut uasa eius domus eripiat. Quid actum est in hac nocte? Exstirpata est superbia, introducta est humilitas. Quid actum est in hac nocte? Princeps omnium uitiorum expulsus est, fons omnium bonorum susceptus est.*

105 This vicinity of the renunciation and profession to the baptism is witnessed by Augustine, but it was widespread.

106 TA 21. 9–12 (ed. Bradshaw 112–114); Orig. *HEx* 8. 4 (GCS 29: 223); Ferguson, 366, 425 and *passim*.

gives his listeners a key to understand the crucial moment of their lives and also to become a commitment for their 'lives in the day' to persevere until the end. The baptismal symbolics that can be found especially in CIPA 1 point to the fact that the pre-baptismal rites were, in fact, an expression of a need to underline some aspects of the baptismal rites that contain themselves the renunciation of the devil and the profession of the faith. As such, the scrutinies can be considered already a 'part' of the baptismal rites as such, albeit administered some time before the baptism itself, and in a form that repeats the same liturgical expression.

At the end then, he comes back to the biblical verse and applies it specifically to the two celebrated rites, where the first part of Romans 13:12 matches the renunciation of the devil, and the second one to the profession of faith. These two liturgical movements belong both to the *traditio symboli* and to the rites immediately preceding their baptism. The attitude of renouncing evil and confessing the faith are shown as a concrete application of the biblical quote:

Most beloved, ... you see what weight and heaviness of sins has been unburdened from you by him who calls you to shoulder his yoke that is easy and his burden that is light: *Take off the works of the darkness and put on the weaponry of the light*. What this means, you will understand from the words of the creed that you have just received and that has been explained to you. What else does it mean to 'take off the works of the darkness' than to renounce the devil, his pomps, and angels? And what else does it mean to 'put on the weaponry of the light' than 'Believe in God the Father almighty'?¹⁰⁷

This example of Quodvultdeus's mystagogy shows how he practiced his liturgical interpretation of the Scripture when he applied it to two pre-baptismal rites, to the Christian process of conversion, and to the central point of the history of salvation, Christ's salvific death on the cross.

¹⁰⁷ CIPA 1. 10 f. (CCL 60: 228): *Videtis, dilectissimi, ... quibus sarcinis peccatorum releuamini ab isto qui uos uocat ut suscipiatis iugum eius lenem et sarcinam eius leuem: 'Deponentes itaque opera tenebrarum, induite uos arma lucis.' Quid sit hoc, ex uerbis symboli quod modo accepistis, uobis expositum esse cognoscite. Quid est deponere opera tenebrarum, nisi renuntiare diabolo, pompis et angelis eius? Et quid est 'induite uos arma lucis', nisi: Credite in Deum patrem omnipotentem?*

4 Exodus Typology of Baptism and Eucharist

The core of the sermon *De cataclysmo* is dedicated to the explanation of baptism with a traditional baptismal typology based on Exodus 12–14. First, Quodvultdeus explains to his audience that they have to look with faith on what is hidden beyond the common elements of the baptismal rites:

Most beloved, you are going to come to the font of water. Do not say in your hearts: 'And this is all that we desired so much?' This visible font is a likeness of the eternal font. You will be reborn from the water and the Spirit. That water does not cleanse only physical dirt, but it frees the soul from sins.¹⁰⁸

A similar answer to the fictive doubts about the efficacy of the ordinary elements at the sacramental rite can also be found in Ambrose's baptismal catechesis.¹⁰⁹ Quodvultdeus seems to know Ambrose's baptismal typology that follows, but he also borrows Augustine's understanding of the sacrament, using verbatim his phrase that was famously received by the posterior sacramental theology of the Christian West: *The word is brought to the material element, and it becomes a sacrament.*¹¹⁰ According to Quodvultdeus, the agent of the purification is, therefore, the 'power of the Word'.¹¹¹ To help his audience believe in this power of the Word present in the ordinary water at the baptism, Quodvultdeus employs his exegesis of Jesus' and Peter's walk on the water in Matthew 14:25–31. In this way, he shows that only faith can reach the invisible part of the sacrament and it is essential to have this faith when receiving the baptism:¹¹² 'If he who comes to the waters of baptism is full of faith, he will be raised up; if he is without faith, he will drown.'¹¹³

108 C 3.1–2 (CCL 60: 410): *Ecce, dilectissimi, uenturi estis ad fontem aquae; non dicatis in cordibus uestris: hoc est totum quod pro magno desiderabamus? Fons iste uisibilis similitudo est fontis aeterni. Renascemini ex aqua et spiritu. Aqua illa non solum corporis sordes mundat, sed animam a peccatis liberat.*

109 Ambr. sacr. 1. 4. 11–12; 1. 6. 20–33; 4. 4. 18; myst. 9. 51 (SAEMO 17: 48–50, 54, 94–96, 162).

110 C 3. 3; Aug. Io. eu. tr. 80. 3 (CCL 60: 411; 36: 529): *Accedit uerbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum.*

111 C 3. 4 (CCL 60: 411).

112 C 3. 4–8 (CCL 60: 411).

113 C 3. 9 (CCL 60: 411): *Si quis enim ueniens ad aquas baptismi, fide plenus est, subleuatur: si quis infidelis est, mergitur.*

4.1 *Crossing of the Red Sea*

Having shown the power of the Word beyond the ordinary element of water, Quodvultdeus goes on to explain 'what the sacrament of water would achieve' in the lives of the *baptizandi*.¹¹⁴ To do this, Quodvultdeus follows the ancient tradition of baptismal catechesis and employs the typology of Israel's exodus from Egypt, focusing on two events: the crossing of the Red Sea and the slaughter of the Paschal Lamb (Exodus 14 and 12–13).¹¹⁵

In the first of these events, Quodvultdeus desires to 'propose a figure' to elucidate for them the truth of 'the sacrament of water'.¹¹⁶ The first of these events shows the liberation of the people through the waters of the Red Sea from their 'worst enemy'.¹¹⁷ This process and Quodvultdeus's narration mirrors the process he described as the change of inheritance in his sermons on the scrutiny and the creed, but it is also largely indebted to a passage in Augustine's *De catechizandis rudibus*.¹¹⁸ In the beginning, the bishop sums up the account of Exodus 1–14,¹¹⁹ culminating with Moses striking the waters of the sea with his staff that resulted in the return of the waters to the sea:

On the command of the Author of all creation, one element of the waters judged both groups. It separated the devout from the impious, washing the former ones, overthrowing the latter ones, cleaning the first ones, killing the others.¹²⁰

From this moment on, Quodvultdeus draws an analogy between Old and New Testament realities, where persons or things from the original story are figures of Christ and his death on the cross that brings salvation, accessible in the baptism:

Moses was the figure of Lord Christ because he was the leader of the people. In the staff, recognise the cross. Realise that the Red Sea is the baptism reddened with the blood of Christ. Discern that the King of Egypt and his people are the devil, the author of sins, with all his servants.¹²¹

114 C 3. 10 (CCL 60: 411): *Audite adhuc, aquae sacramentum quid in uobis operabitur.*

115 C 3. 10; 4. 1 (CCL 60: 411, 413).

116 C 3. 10 (CCL 60: 411): *aquae sacramentum; proponam figuram.*

117 C 3. 16 (CCL 60: 412).

118 CIPA 2. 1–3. 1 (CCL 60: 228 f.); Aug. *cat. rud.* 20. 34 (CCL 46: 158 f.); Isola, 'Tipologia', 1210.

119 C 3. 11–20 (CCL 60: 411 f.).

120 C 3. 20–21 (CCL 60: 412): *Ingressi sunt alii saluandi, alii damnandi. Vnum elementum aquarum auctore totius creaturae iubente iudicauit utrosque: separauit pios ab impiis; illos abluuit, istos obruit; illos mundauit, istos occidit.*

121 C 3. 22 (CCL 60: 412): *Moses figuram habuit Domini Christi, quoniam dux fuit populi. In*

In this way, as he declares, the audience may know how these Exodus 'figures passed over to the vision of truth' present in the New Testament.¹²² Afterwards, Quodvultdeus applies the Exodus story and the power of Christ's blood on his public, the *competentes* to experiment in the coming days the efficacy of baptism, drawing their attention to the 'new Moses', Jesus:

The devil is at rage when he sees you being liberated from his oppression through the baptismal water. Cry out to our Moses, Lord Jesus, and let the staff of the cross strike the sea of baptism and let the waters come back and overthrow the Egyptians, so that—as none of the Egyptians remained—nothing would remain even of your sins.¹²³

The invisible efficacy of baptism is documented with its inherent link with the Exodus story and the power of Christ's cross; in a way, the neophytes are made part of the Exodus story. In this way, the unity and continuity of God's operation throughout the history is emphasised, so that the present *competentes* would believe that God can act in this way also in their lives. It is even possible that the described historical circumstances of the chosen people oppressed by the 'Pharaoh the prince of Egypt' could resonate in the context of the present political situation of Quodvultdeus's audience: this would reinforce the impressiveness of the bishop's exposition.

As the last step, the efficacy of this operation of Christ in the baptism is connected to the Patristic perception of Christ as Creator who is equal to the Father almighty:

He who made everything, cleanses everything; he who created everything whole repairs what has been lost. Let him destroy the Pharaoh, the devil who was the author of death, and let him liberate his people by the salutary water.¹²⁴

uirga agnoscite crucem. Mare Rubrum agnoscite baptismum Christi sanguine purpuratum; regem Aegyptiorum populumque eius auctorem peccatorum diabolum cum omnibus ministris eius.

122 C 4. 1 (CCL 60: 412f.): *figurae illae quomodo transierunt ad speciem ueritatis.*

123 C 3. 23–24 (CCL 60: 412): *Saeuit diabolus, quando uos uidet per aquam baptismi a sua oppresione liberari. Exclamate ad Moysen uestrum Dominum Christum, et uirga crucis percutiat mare baptismi, reuertatur aqua et operiat Aegyptios; ut, quemadmodum nullus remansit Aegyptiorum, nihil remaneat etiam uestrorum peccatorum.*

124 C 3. 24 (CCL 60: 412): *Totum mundet, qui totum fecit; reparet perdita, qui creauit omnia integra; exstinguat pharaonem diabolum mortis auctorem, et suum populum liberet per aquam salutarem.*

The procedure Quodvultdeus follows in his baptismal typology of Exodus 14 starts, therefore, from the rite, then he moves to the Old Testament story, explains how the Old Testament realities relate to the New Testament ones, shows how this also involves his present audience, and, finally, connects the power of baptism with Christ who is equal to the Father and Creator of all creation. For Quodvultdeus instead, the Son is of the same substance as the Father, and can, therefore, achieve what Quodvultdeus claims. That is also the reason why Quodvultdeus dedicates so much space in his pre-baptismal catecheses to defy various heretical views.

4.2 *The Passover Lamb*

The second typology builds upon the celebration of the Passover by the historical and 'spiritual' Israel, that is, the Church.¹²⁵ Quodvultdeus starts again from a narration of Israel's celebration of the Passover, focusing on the Lord's precept of how to celebrate it by slaughtering and eating the lamb, so that, having marked the doorposts of their homes with the 'sign of the blood' (*signum sanguinis*), the 'liberated people' would not need to fear the angel destroyer anymore.¹²⁶ The bishop recalls three precepts present in Exodus 12:8–10 LXX: *You shall not break one bone of his, you shall not leave anything until morning. You shall eat the lamb with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.*¹²⁷ From the original celebration of the Passover he moves then to the celebration of the Passover by the 'spiritual Israel, Abraham's children according to faith, not according to flesh'.¹²⁸ He identifies the Lamb with Jesus, called the 'Lamb of God' by John the Baptist in John 1:29, and from this moment he explains typologically other figures of the Exodus celebration of Passover:

Besmear the doorposts of your house with his blood. Point to it and say: 'Look, the cross of Christ's blood is in the fronts of our shamefacedness.' Say with Paul: *But far be it from me to boast save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Galatians 6:14). *You shall not break one bone of his* (Psalm 33:20 Vulg.), it is said. This has been fulfilled in the Lord's Passion, in the sacrifice of the holy Lamb, when, crucified with two robbers, He was hanging

¹²⁵ C 4. 1–15 (CCL 60: 412–414).

¹²⁶ C 4. 2 (CCL 60: 413); Exodus 12:9–11. For the symbolical meaning of this christological title, see Maria Pia Ciccarese, *Animali simbolici. Alle origini del bestiario cristiano* (Bologna: EDB, 2002), i. 61–65.

¹²⁷ C 4. 3 (CCL 60: 413): *Os non comminuetis ex eo, nec relinquetis quidquam in mane. Cum picridiis et azymis agnum comedetis.*

¹²⁸ C 4. 4 (CCL 60: 413): *Israel spiritualis, fili Abrahae secundum fidem, non secundum carnem.*

among them, freeing with his utmost justice the one who professed him and punished the other who blasphemed him.¹²⁹

Moving to the New Testament reality, Quodvultdeus exhorts at once the *competentes* to 'besmear the doorposts of their houses' with the blood of this Lamb: in fact, they have been already signed on their forehead with 'the cross of Christ's blood' (*crux sanguinis Christi*).¹³⁰ The efficacy of the entrance rite of the catechumenate is thus linked to the power of Christ's blood spilt on the cross. The moment of Christ's death, prefigured in the precept of Exodus 12:10 LXX, when the soldiers do not break his bones but pierce his side with a lance, is the cardinal event of the history of salvation and origin of the Church and of the efficacy of her sacraments:

You shall not break one bone of his (Psalm 33:20 Vulg.). But one of the soldiers pierced his side and, at once, blood and water came out, that is the twin sacraments of the Mother Church. The persecutor pierced the side with a lance, and the Redeemer poured out his price. This blood inebriates the mind, so that it would forget the love of this world. That water cleanses the soul, so that the body would be free of the devil's filth.¹³¹

The effect of the baptism to be celebrated a couple of days later by Quodvultdeus's audience is connected to Christ's sacrifice on the cross and set in the panorama of the spiritual struggle of the redeemed believer with the devil, against whom he is protected by Christ's blood prefigured in the Exodus figure. The same continuity and unity of God's action in the course of history and celebrated in the sacrament is then shown also in the daily celebration of the Eucharist, prefigured by the other part of the precept:

129 C 4. 5–6 (CCL 60: 413): *Linis sanguine eius postes domus tuae: demonstra et dic: Ecce crux sanguinis Christi in frontibus est pudoris nostri. Dic cum Paulo: 'Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Iesu Christi.' Os non comminuetis ex eo, dictum est: impletum est hoc in ipsa Domini passione, ipsius sancti Agni immolatione, quando crucifixus cum duobus latronibus in medio pendebat ipsa summa iustitia liberans unum confitentem, alium puniens blasphemantem.*

130 C 4. 5 (CCL 60: 413); Aug. c. *Faust.* 12. 30; *Io. eu. tr.* 50. 2; 55. 1 (CSEL 25: 358; CCL 36: 433 f., 463 f.); Isola, 'Tipologia', 1204 f.

131 C 4. 10–11 (CCL 60: 413 f.): *'Os non comminuetis ex eo.' Sed unus e militibus latus eius aperuit, et continuo exiit sanguis et aqua, quae sunt matris Ecclesiae gemina sacramenta. Percussit latus lancea persecutor, et fudit pretium Redemptor. Hic sanguis inebriat mentem, ut amorem obliuiscatur mundi. Haec aqua mundat animam, ut corpus sordes careat diaboli.*

You shall not leave anything until morning (Exodus 12:10): this is done now. The Lamb is being eaten during the night of this age, so that when the morning would come that will have no evening, the sacrifice of the image of the lamb would not be immolated anymore, but we would find then the same Lamb that we eat every day and whose blood we drink as the perfect Priest who here was undoubtedly slain for our salvation.¹³²

The Old Testament story is linked to the New Testament core event of the crucifixion of the Lamb of God, to the sacramental present of the Church celebrating the Eucharist and partaking of Christ's body and blood, and to the eschatological future when all the sacrifices would cease.¹³³ As the Old Testament realities pointed towards the New Testament ones, which are those celebrated by the Church, so this day's sacraments also point towards the eschaton and it is the faith that allows the making of this step.¹³⁴ This is also why the figures Quodvultdeus uses are more than just symbols: the reality they prefigure is, in fact, already present in them and it is accessible to the eyes of faith.

At last, Quodvultdeus asks what are 'the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread' of the third precept taken from Exodus 12:8–10. He explains the bitter herbs as 'the bitter voice of David', the author of the Psalter, related to the 'time of the holy martyrs', that is, to the present time of the Church when she is persecuted.¹³⁵ The Apostle Paul—a member of both the carnal and spiritual Israel—is then used to explain the meaning of the 'unleavened bread' with 1 Corinthians 5:8: *With none of the old yeast and no leavening of evil and wickedness, but only the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* The verse is applied to the situation of the Church surrounded by heresies and the figures of Exodus 12–14.

The typological exegesis of the Passover Lamb, applied to the twin sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, is a sublime example of Quodvultdeus's mystagogical method that tries to draw the listeners into the unitary action of God throughout the whole of human history and beyond. A. Isola has documented how traditional this approach of Quodvultdeus is to the baptismal exegesis of

¹³² C 4. 11–12 (CCL 60: 414): *'Nec relinquitis quidquam ex eo usque in mane'. Hoc nunc agitur: comeditur enim agnus per noctem huius saeculi, ut cum mane illud uenerit quod uesperum non habebit, non iam offeratur sacrificium imaginis agni, sed ipsum agnum quem cotidie comedimus, et cuius sanguinem bibimus, inueniamus illic eum sacerdotem perfectum, quem hic pro nostra salute constat occisum.*

¹³³ Similarly also in L 1. 37. 53 (CCL 60: 62).

¹³⁴ Isola, 'Tipologia', 1206.

¹³⁵ C 4. 13 (CCL 60: 414): *uox illa amara ad tempus sanctorum martyrum emissa per sanctum David.*

Exodus 12 when he traced it to Cyprian, Lactantius, Optatus, and Augustine.¹³⁶ Where A. Isola notices in Augustine's and Quodvultdeus's baptismal exegesis of Exodus 12 a lack of 'a contextual reference to the imminent Kingdom of the Lord' which was present in the previous tradition, especially in Lactantius,¹³⁷ there can nevertheless be noticed a tendency towards the eschaton when 'the perfect Priest' would be encountered face to face. From the view of the history of liturgy, it is also a remarkable witness to the everyday celebration of the Eucharist in Quodvultdeus's Carthage that would be open to the *competentes* after their baptism.

4.3 *Christ the New Moses and the Stairs of the Cross*

After presenting the Exodus typology, Quodvultdeus turns to Christ the Lamb and the new Moses in prayer that—again in comparison with Moses's struggle with Pharaoh's magicians in Exodus¹³⁸—presents Christ's teaching as 'spread throughout all the nations, overpowering the insane heretics'.¹³⁹ Moses's staff (*uirga*) is a figure of Christ's cross that strokes the waters of baptism and of the Christ himself and his power that manifests itself in the weakness.¹⁴⁰ Remarkably, Moses' staff swallowing the snakes of Egyptian magicians is presented as a figure of the doctrine of Christ spread through the world that overpowers all the heresies, 'brought forth by the devil's ministers as by Pharaoh's magicians', are already defeated by this teaching guarded by the Church,¹⁴¹ with the notable exceptions of the Arians. Christ, 'our Moses ... holy Christ, having equal power with the Father', is invoked at this moment as the one capable of conquering the Arian heresy once thought already dead.¹⁴² The Christ of the Nicene faith alone can be endowed with the power that would allow him to act both in baptism and in the Eucharist; in fact, Quodvultdeus's mystagogical method would not be convincing if Christ were to be inferior to the Father and if the three persons of the Trinity were not equal.¹⁴³ The heresies are, therefore, realisations of the Old Testament figures and even they are, therefore, considered a part of the history of salvation where God's action continued, as it did in Exodus and in the New Testament.

¹³⁶ Isola, 'Tipologia', 1207–1211.

¹³⁷ Ibidem, 1209.

¹³⁸ The same topic can be found also in L D. 13. 22 (CCL 60: 207).

¹³⁹ C 5. 2 (CCL 60: 414): *Doctrina Christi diffusa per omnes gentes, haereticos superans dementes*.

¹⁴⁰ C 3. 22–23; 5. 1–2 (CCL 60: 412, 414).

¹⁴¹ C 5. 2–9 (CCL 60: 414f.).

¹⁴² C 5. 10–11 (CCL 60: 415): *Moses noster ... Christe sancte, aequalem potestatem cum Patre habens*.

¹⁴³ C 5. 21–27; 5. 30–37 (CCL 60: 416–418).

After putting a pile of anti-Arian testimonies in the mouth of Christ the 'serpent staff',¹⁴⁴ the heresies are inserted into the Gospel imagery of the Good Shepherd who shepherds his flock with an 'iron staff' and looks for lost sheep to bring them home.¹⁴⁵ The staff becomes then not only an object that permits us to relate to Christ and to other biblical realities, but also a symbol of a 'stairway to heaven' which the *competentes* are invited to climb:

Lord Jesus ... I see you as a great architect who holds a staff, hangs on a staff, and doing with this staff many miracles. Most beloved, while I investigate the divine Scriptures, I am very worried of the exposition of what this staff means. Holy Mary is the staff, the staff is Christ himself, the staff is the cross. And how great and wonderful things this architect made out of this staff! And he made the tree of the cross where he himself hung the corner stone and the stairs to heaven through which he brought the lapsed man to the Father ... Climb up safely you who desire heaven. Do not be frightened that they are narrow, long, and high; do not worry, its steps do not change, as the architect has made them firm, for he wanted to have his hands attached to its wood.¹⁴⁶

The figure of the 'staff' connects the Exodus story with that of Christ's cross but also with the audience's present baptism and the future eschatological destiny of the desired eternal life. The spiritual path to heaven the bishop proposes to the *baptizandi* is the cross and their relation with Christ crucified as he invites them to climb the four steps of the cross.¹⁴⁷ With his intention to involve his audience in the typological discourse on the cross, Quodvultdeus presents, again, his mystagogy which goes to the core of the meaning of the baptism, and at the same time he extends this experience even to their life after the baptism, even to the end of their spiritual journey. And yet, the cross and

144 C 5. 11–37 (CCL 60: 415–418).

145 C 6. 1–4 (CCL 60: 418).

146 C 6. 4–7, 9 (CCL 60: 418): *Domine Iesu ... magnum te architectum uideo, uirgam portantem, in uirga pendentem, et de ista uirga multa miracula facientem. Multum expauesco expositionem uirgae huius, dilectissimi, dum loca diuinarum scripturarum considero. Virga Maria sancta, uirga ipse Christus, uirga crux. Et de ista uirga quam magna et mira fecit hic architectus! Et arborem fecit crucis ubi ipse angularis pependit lapis, et scalas caeli per quas hominem lapsum ad patrem leuauit. Ascende securus, qui desideras caelum: non te terreat earum nec angustia, nec longitudo, nec altitudo; nihil timeas, non nutant gradus eius, quos ille architectus sic confirmauit, ut in eius ligno manus suas clauis affigi uoluerit.*

147 C 6. 12–16 (CCL 60: 418f.).

the hardship he mentions make clear that he speaks to them in the present situation when they are threatened by the Arian heresy both spiritually and physically.

5 The Mystagogy on the Power of Christ's Blood

The other of the two discourses of Quodvultdeus delivered immediately before the baptism, the *De ultima quarta feria*, contains an extensive catechesis on the power of Christ's blood. The discourse opens with Paul's topic of the 'Lord's farming' (1 Corinthians 3:6–9) applied to the Church and to the catechuminate the *competentes* entered after having been signed with the cross on their forehead and during which they have been ploughed with the 'wood of the cross' and prepared for the baptismal washing.¹⁴⁸ In this way, the public was involved in the biblical story that they probably already knew from their participation at the *missa catechumenorum*. In this way, the preacher made clear that they are part of the same history of salvation as the various biblical persons are. The *competentes*, thus, became consciously a target of God's action. The bishop also seeks to convince them that God can and will manifest the same power and wonders upon them, as he did in the biblical narrative.¹⁴⁹ Such a mystagogical catechesis must have had an overwhelming impression upon the candidates that were to be baptised in just a couple of days. The allegory of man as rocky ground full of 'the thorns of bad' desire is then developed with two images: the man who refused the invitation to the feast because he had bought five yoke of oxen (Luke 14:19)¹⁵⁰ and the parable of the sower (Mark 4).¹⁵¹

Accept the Lord's word, every field, every man, either barren or fruitful. I shall sow, and you will see how to take care to receive it. I shall water, you will take care of what kind of fruit you bring ... And even you, every soul that comes to Christ, you are a thorny and arid land.¹⁵²

148 UQF 1. 3–4; 2. 11–12 (CCL 60: 395, 397).

149 Luigi F. Pizzolato, 'La nascita della letteratura mistagogica', ASR 7 (2002), 270; Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 81.

150 UQF 1. 5–10 (CCL 60: 395f.).

151 UQF 2. 1–4 (CCL 60: 396).

152 UQF 2. 5, 8 (CCL 60: 396f.): *Accipe uerbum Domini, omnis ager, omnis homo, siue sterilis, siue fecundus: ego spargam, tu uide quomodo accipias; ego erogem, tu uide quales fructus reddas ... Et tu, unaquaeque anima quae accedis ad Christum, terra es spinosa et arida.*

The three previous biblical passages are all applied to the situation of Quodvultdeus's audience: the *competentes* a few days before their baptism, and all of them, in fact, point to what the baptism would perform in their lives:

Do you want to know what kind of farming would be applied to you, what grace from above would be poured out upon you? Look, acknowledge that you are ploughed up by Christ's cross when you are signed by his sign on your forehead; you are watered by his blood when you are baptised in his death: the Apostle says: *All of us, when we were baptised in Christ, were baptised in his death* (Romans 6:3).¹⁵³

The baptism is presented as a moment when the originally arid and thorny land of the candidates' soul will be watered with Christ's blood.¹⁵⁴ The subject of Christ's blood spilt on the earth opens with two archetypal bloodsheds that are also connected with the term 'field' (*ager*). The first of these is Judas's betrayal of Christ that led imminently to his death and the shedding of his blood on the creed. Having sold his Master's blood and having himself bought a field with the money he received, Judas entered into the devil's possession and lost his heirloom in the heaven.¹⁵⁵ In this manner, Judas—and with him also the Jews¹⁵⁶—became an anti-model of the attitude assumed by the *competentes* during the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli*. The 'Potter's Field' bought by Judas becomes the 'Blood Field' and 'this land cries out by which or whose blood it has been bought'.¹⁵⁷ The second bloodshed is Cain's fratricide (Genesis 4), presented as a *similitudo* of Christ's Passion.¹⁵⁸ Even here the land, a field in fact, is watered with the blood of an innocent person¹⁵⁹ and the fictive dialogue with Cain is mirrored by that with Judas who is asked: 'Where is Christ your brother?'¹⁶⁰ In this way Quodvultdeus presents to his audience, using Judas's

153 CIPA 2. 12 (CCL 60: 397): *Vis nosse qualis tibi adhibeatur cultura, qualis te desuper perfundat gratia? Ecce agnosce, Christi cruce exararis, quando eius signo in fronte signaris; eius sanguine rigaris, quando in morte ipsius baptizaris. 'Quotquod' enim, ait Apostolus, 'in Christo baptizati sumus, in morte ipsius baptizati sumus.'*

154 UQF 3. 1 (CCL 60: 397).

155 UQF 3. 2–4 (CCL 60: 397 f.); according to Matthew 27:5–7, Judas rejected the money and the chief priests bought Potter's Field with it.

156 UQF 3. 17 (CCL 60: 398); see also S1 6. 8 (CCL 60: 321).

157 UQF 3. 7 (CCL 60: 398): *Clamat haec terra quali uel quo pretio fuerit comparata*. See also 3. 5 and 4. 2 (CCL 60: 398 f.).

158 UQF 3. 8 (CCL 60: 398).

159 UQF 3. 16 (CCL 60: 398).

160 UQF 3. 17 (CCL 60: 399): *Judas, ubi est Christus frater tuus?*

betrayal, entwined with Genesis 4, the universal proportion of Christ's sacrifice and the notion of how precious it is for their lives: every man and woman, 'the land', is called by Quodvultdeus to accept Christ's blood that can bring blessings to everyone.¹⁶¹

Having raised the audience's desire to accept the blood of Christ, he has to answer the question of how a person can say 'yes' to the precious effect of Christ's blood being spilt.¹⁶² This effect finds its figure in the Potter's field and Quodvultdeus puts before his *competentes* the choice to follow either the false examples of Judas and Cain and become an arid land, or rather that of the Christian martyrs, so much venerated in the North African provinces during the first centuries, who spilt their blood to bring witness to Christ.¹⁶³ Not only does Quodvultdeus step into the tradition of the great esteem the African Christians had for St Stephen, Cyprian, and Lawrence, but, in passing, he reminds his audience that the steps they are going to take, that is, to be baptised in the Catholic Church, can bring them to situations when they would need to give the same witness of their own blood as the martyrs had: again, the shadow of the Vandal persecution of the Catholics can be presumed here.¹⁶⁴ The story of Abel, Jesus, and the martyrs is their story which they are going to enter when they are baptised:

Christian soul, you already realise how even you are by that blood made snow white, as you are to rise, all beautiful in body and heart, from the fount of Christ, consecrated in blood.¹⁶⁵

The mystagogy brings the believer into the depth of the celebrated sacraments; it is not a simple description of what has happened or what is to happen, it rather brings the believer to the heart of the event which is the fundament of the sacrament and the source of its efficiency. That is why Quodvultdeus does not describe the baptismal rite as such, with its individual rites, but he tries to convey the message that the *baptizandi* are not to be cleansed by ordinary water but by the power of the blood of Christ that consecrates the baptismal font:

¹⁶¹ UQF 3. 22–23; 4. 1 (CCL 60: 399).

¹⁶² UQF 4. 1 (CCL 60: 399).

¹⁶³ UQF 4. 2–8 (CCL 60: 399f.).

¹⁶⁴ UQF 7. 6 (CCL 60: 405).

¹⁶⁵ UQF 5. 1 (CCL 60: 400): *Iam agnoscis, anima christiana, quemadmodum et tu ex illo sanguine efficiaris candida, ut omnis et corpore et corde pulchra ascendas de fonte Christi consecrata in sanguine.*

What is it that flowed from the side of the Crucified? Blood and water: from the blood the redness came, and from the water the beauty. In these two sacraments, the individual souls are adorned. Out of them, the only Bride-Church is made. To her, it is said in the Song of Songs: *How beautiful you are, my sister, my beloved! How lovely are your cheeks* (Song 4:1.3 LXX).¹⁶⁶

It was already traditional to apply the Song of Songs to the description of the soul or the Church at their baptism. In Africa, it was Cyprian who had earlier quoted the Canticle in the baptismal context and the use of this Old Testament book is particularly characteristic for Ambrose's baptismal mystagogy.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, the typology of the blood and water from the side of Christ, interpreted as the sacraments of the Eucharist and baptism, can be found in many Patristic authors, and Quodvultdeus borrows it, most likely, from Augustine.¹⁶⁸ Quodvultdeus develops the baptismal imagery with other spousal verses from Song 8:5: *Who is this coming up all cleansed?*, and Psalm 44:9 Vulg., which the bishop had applied to the Church as both spouse and queen: *The queen stood by your right hand, clothed in golden robe, surrounded by diverse colours*. The verses from Song of Songs and the Psalms are weaved into a cry of the Church made up of the baptised that prays to her Spouse, a cry to which also the public are engaged and whose desire to be baptised is enkindled:

You ask about me, the one who came up all cleansed? I am the one whom you found unseemly and whom you made beautiful. I am she whose prayers you heard, when you made me sing in the psalms: *Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow* (Psalm 50:7). Why do you marvel at my beauty, when you know that this is your work? Why do you ask her whom you yourself made? You see me cleansed, but it is you who made me washed and whiter than snow. As you saw me coming up, I came to know you who were coming from heaven and I loved you who were hanging on the cross. Your humility has become my pride, your unseemliness has become my beauty. For if you had not descended from the cross wounded, I would not

166 UQF 5, 2 (CCL 60: 400): *Quid enim manavit ex illo latere crucifixi? Sanguis et aqua: ex sanguine rubor, ex aqua splendor. In istis duobus sacramentis decorantur singulae animae, ex quibus una illa pulchra efficitur sponsa Ecclesia, cui dicitur in Canticis canticorum: 'Quam speciosa es, soror mea, dilecta mea, quam speciosae sunt genae tuae!'*

167 Ambr. *sacr.* 5, 2. 5–6, 8–11; 3, 2. 14–15; *myst.* 6, 29; 7, 35–41; 9, 55, 57–58 (SAEMO 17: 104–108, 150, 154–156, 166–168); Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 104.

168 Aug. *ciu.* 22, 17 (CCL 48: 836).

have come up from the font cleansed. Truly it is said: *Love is as strong as death* (Song 8:6). How much the Spouse is abased here, he who, loving the unseemly one so much, came even to escape from death so that he would make her beautiful! *And escape from death belongs to the Lord* (Psalm 67:20). The Prophet says: *We saw him: he had no form or charm* (Isaiah 53:2). Why do you marvel? You have been made such by love.¹⁶⁹

In this lengthy but, for understanding Quodvultdeus's 'patchwork' way of working with Bible language, instructive passage, the bishop piles up the verses of the Song of Songs and the Psalms to describe baptism as a spiritual marriage between Christ and the soul and to sum up, in a poetical and prayerful way, the summit of the history of salvation. In this way, he wants to bring his audience to a state of amazement regarding Christ's power to cleanse the human soul from sins and to give her a new, royal dignity.¹⁷⁰ The audience is part of the Church, of the new humanity cleansed by baptism in Christ's humiliation on the cross and it is engaged in this dialogue with the Lord. At the same time, the bond between the audience and the Church, who are involved in this dialogue with her Spouse as well, is strengthened and the baptismal identity and the sense of belonging of the candidates for baptism and the baptised believers was fostered.

As a negative example, Quodvultdeus brings up Peter, who asked Christ to go away because he was a sinner and who denied Christ during his Passion, unable to recognise his beauty or splendour.¹⁷¹ Obviously, the audience, possibly either aware of their sins or not attracted by the humiliating image of a

169 UQF 5. 5–10 (CCL 60: 401): *De me interrogas quoniam si quae ascendi dealbata. Ego sum quam foedam inuenisti, pulchram que fecisti; ego sum cuius preces audisti, quando me in psalmo cantare fecisti: 'lauabis me, et super niuem dealbabor'. Quid ergo miraris pulchritudinem meam, cum scias hanc esse operam tuam? Quid interrogas quod ipse fecisti? Vides me dealbatam, tu lotam, tu super niuem fecisti candidam. Vt uideas me ascendentem, te cognoui de caelo descendentem, te amaui in cruce pendentem. Humilitas tua facta est exaltatio mea, foeditas tua facta est pulchritudo mea. Nisi enim tu de cruce uulneratus descenderes, ego dealbata de fonte non ascenderem. Vere dictum est quia 'ualida est sicut mors dilectio'. Quo usque se sponsus hic inclinauit, qui tantum amando foedam ut faceret pulchram, usque ad mortis exitum uenit? 'Et domini mortis exitus'. 'Vidimus' enim 'eum,' ait propheta, 'et non habebat speciem, neque decorem'. Quid miraris? amando talis factus est.*

170 Quodvultdeus's use of the Song of Songs in the baptismal and ecclesiological context has been studied in David Vopřada, 'Křestní a ekleziologická interpretace Velepísne u Quodvultdea z Kartága', in *Patristická a středověká recepcia Šalamúna. Kazatel—Príslovia—Pieseň piesní*, ed. M. Lichner (Olomouc: Teologická fakulta Trnavskej univerzity—Cyrilometodějská teologická fakulta Univerzity Palackého, 2017), 119–150.

171 UQF 5. 11–21 (CCL 60: 401f.).

crucified God, is personified in Peter: 'Do not become frightened, do not worry, do not deny!' ¹⁷² Quodvultdeus's audience is expected to recognise Christ resurrected and to follow him:

Follow, Bride, follow the footsteps of your Bridegroom: let no fear hold you ... from the company of your Beloved! Love the Lover, because he was the first who loved the non-loving. Seek the Seeker, because he was the first who searched for the one who did not search. Seek and tell your Bridegroom: *Where do you rest at noon? That I may not become veiled by the flocks of your companions* (Song 1:6 LXX)? That I, whom you loved so much, for whom you poured out your blood, whose tabernacle is in the sun *may not become veiled by the flocks of your companions?* ¹⁷³

Quodvultdeus presents the African Church, dwelling 'at noon', that is, on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, as it is divided because of various heretical groups and their doctrines: this was the reality of the Christians at Carthage for the whole of the fourth and fifth centuries. He is therefore aware of how difficult a situation awaits the newly baptised and he speaks about the support in their lives. This support they are to seek in the Eucharist:

And you, Christian soul who rose from the most holy font, wholly imbued with the redness and beauty, very beautiful and splendid white, keep your beauty! Recognise who you were and what you are to become: take care not to leave the table of your Bridegroom. To remain beautiful, you will eat daily his body to have eternal life. To have eternal life, you will drink his blood: take care not to leave that table. [...] The table of your Bridegroom offers the whole bread and the holy chalice. This bread, despite being broken and crumbled, we have seen in the Passion, and yet it remained whole in his inseparable unity with the Father. ¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² UQF 5, 16 (CCL 60: 401): *Noli expauescere, noli timere, noli negare.*

¹⁷³ UQF 5, 25–26 (CCL 60: 402): *Sequere, sequere, sponsa, uestigia sponsi tui: nullus te metus reuocet a consortio dilecti tui. Ama amantem, quia prius ille amauit non amantem: require requirentem, quia prius ille quaesiuit non quaerentem. Require, et dic sponso tuo: 'Vbi pascis, ubi cubas in meridie? Ne forte fiam sicut operta super greges sodalium tuorum'. Quam sic dilexisti, pro qua sanguinem fudisti, cuius tabernaculum in sole posuisti 'non fiam sicut operta super greges sodalium tuorum'.*

¹⁷⁴ UQF 6, 6–7, 9 (CCL 60: 403): *Tu autem, anima christiana, quae ascensura es ex sacratissimo fonte, rubore atque decore perfusa omnis, speciosa nimis et candida, serua decorem tuum; agnosce quid fueris et quid eris, uide ne deseras mensam sponsi tui. Vt pulchra permanear, carnes eius quotidie manducabis; ut uitam aeternam habeas, sanguinem eius potabis: uide*

Notably, the passage uses figurative language while speaking about the Eucharist, but this can be explained with two realities associated with the mystical method. First, it is a way of keeping the practice of *disciplina arcani*, which did not allow the Christian believers to speak openly about the most precious realities of the faith to those who have not been baptised. Second, this figurative language points also to numerous eucharistic figures present in the Old Testament, in this case, Psalm 22(23). Third, Quodvultdeus does not describe how the Eucharist is celebrated but rather its meaning. What is more, the text also discloses that the Eucharist was celebrated daily in Carthage, as the candidates are encouraged to eat daily at the 'table of the Bridegroom'. Lastly, the Eucharist is connected firmly to the baptism and Christ's Passion and through the biblical verses, especially from the Song of Songs, Isaiah, and the Psalms, and it is connected to the archetypal bloodshed of Abel.

The preacher wishes to arouse the amazement of his listeners when he speaks so highly about the power of Christ's blood at baptism and its ability to keep the dignity acquired at baptism undefiled. The Eucharist is seen both from the viewpoint of Christ's death on the creed and that of the inseparable unity of the Father and the Son that exists in eternity. In fact, Christ's unity and equality with the Father is the reason why participation in the Eucharist has the power the bishop claims it has. Such a claim would not be possible using the Arian or other heretical doctrine Quodvultdeus criticises and against which he warns. If the Arians did not consider the Son equal to the Father, they could not also accept the discourse on the power of Christ's blood being effective at baptism and in the Eucharist. What Quodvultdeus offers is no magical perception of the sacraments, but rather a vivid view on the power of Christ's redemptive suffering and his divinity which the Christian believer can approach and participate with in his baptism and in the daily partaking of the Eucharist. Grounded in Jesus' discourse on the bread of life in John 6:62–69, Quodvultdeus sees the Eucharist as a key for the Christian to stay with Christ within the Bride-Church: he who does not accept this word is a heretic.¹⁷⁵ To accept the word was already a crucial topic in the exordium in the commentary on Mark 4.¹⁷⁶ The catechesis closes with an exhortation to love the Mother Church who bears the baptised as her children.¹⁷⁷

ne deseras hanc mensam ... Mensa sponsi tui panem habet integrum, et calicem sanctum: quem panem etsi confractum comminutumque uidimus in passione, integer tamen mansit in illa sua cum Patre indiuidua unitate.

175 UQF 6. 10–14 (CCL 60: 404).

176 UQF 2. 2 (CCL 60: 396).

177 UQF 7. 2–4 (CCL 60: 405 f.).

6 Non-typological Sacramental Catechesis

It has to be added that not all of Quodvultdeus's expositions on the celebrated rites use the typological reading of the biblical books. Where the explanation of the renunciation of the devil and handing over of the creed in CIPA 1 was based upon a liturgical exegesis of a New Testament verse, the explanation he gives in S1 1 lacks such a typological approach.¹⁷⁸ However, it is a mystagogical catechesis that aims at the exposition of the meaning (*ratio*) of the celebrated 'sacraments'.¹⁷⁹ Quodvultdeus achieves the relating of the attitude of the *competentes* during the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli* to Christ.¹⁸⁰ However, he is more interested in encouraging them to stand fast in their spiritual battle¹⁸¹ and proposes to them the spiritual 'spectacles', that is, the mysteries celebrated in the Church.¹⁸² Despite the allegorical language and biblical references, S1, although being mystagogical, does not employ the typological method.

The explanation of the renunciation of the devil at the beginning of S2 applies very succinctly to 1 Corinthians and 1 Peter 2:5, from speaking about the believers being a part of God's building, to the decision to renounce the devil, his pomps, and angels.¹⁸³ However, it is the only glimpse of liturgical exegesis of the Scriptures in the passage that contains a moralising parenthesis on concupiscence. But again, the creed is then explained as the expulsion of 'the worst usurper' and introduction of the 'best Master'.¹⁸⁴ The passage could be called a mystagogical catechesis, however brief, but the typological reading, present especially in *De cataclysmo*, is missing here.

Quodvultdeus's description of the renunciation of the devil in A1 is also a mystagogical discourse not only on the meaning of the rite but also on the unity of the Church. However, although there are biblical references in this passage, typological exegesis is not applied.¹⁸⁵

It is evident that it is not in all cases that Quodvultdeus used the typological method to provide the explanation of the celebrated rites. Still, given the sacramental context of this introduction into the meaning of the rites, related to the mystery of Christ, these passages also could be called mystagogical.

178 S1 1. 19 (CCL 60: 305–307).

179 S1 1. 1 (CCL 60: 305).

180 S1 1. 5–6, 9 (CCL 60: 305f.).

181 S1 1. 10–19 (CCL 60: 306f.).

182 S1 2. 5–8 (CCL 60: 307).

183 S2 1. 2–3 (CCL 60: 335).

184 S2 2. 1 (CCL 60: 335).

185 A1 1. 10–3. 9 (CCL 60: 441–443).



In this section, three features that Quodvultdeus uses to build up the community of his Church, bringing the *competentes* to understand what their baptism means and reminding the already baptised of the same, have been presented: the ecclesiology of the Church who is a fertile and virginal Mother, the spouse of Christ; the typological exegesis of the Bible; and the mystagogical method to deliver the inner meaning of the baptismal rites. The following pages are dedicated to the defence of the Church: and again, all three tools pervade the bishop's discourse. Quodvultdeus portrays his Mother Church as standing among her enemies, portraying her and her opponents using biblical exegesis. The mystagogical discourses present in C and UQF all end with an anti-heretical discourse. To this aspect of Quodvultdeus's catechesis, we now move our attention.

Defending the Church

Where Quodvultdeus's primary concern was to build the community of his Church, he was well aware that he had to promote her unity and the believers' and candidates' identification with Christ and the Church also by defining the frontiers of the community and its faith. In this process, he had to take an active role in keeping the integrity of the faith of his flock.¹ He does so by repeatedly affirming the exclusive maternity of the Church: no heretic can have her as a Mother and keep, in her, the spousal relationship to Christ.² The unique motherhood of the Church and her spousal relationship to Christ of the Church is something unique and why she sets limits against heretic 'lies',³ why she warns her children to flee pagan spectacles,⁴ and why the virginal Church guards her adolescents from the impurity of heresy and against the devil.⁵ Only one is the Mother and the Bride, the Catholic Church, and any other religious group who calls itself a church does so in vain, as they are not spouses, but concubines.⁶ They did keep the *fides*—both fidelity and faith—of Christ the Bridegroom who searches for his true Spouse, and the 'catholic unity' of the Church, a unity which is also that of the faith, that is, doctrine.⁷

Quodvultdeus's emphasis on the ecclesiological imagery of the one and only Mother, virgin, and spouse explains why he demarcates such a sharp contrast among those who are inside and outside, those who will receive eternal life and those who will not.⁸ In fact, his ecclesiology marks his attitude towards everything that is not the Church: against heretics, the Jews, pagans, but also against the devil.⁹ He claims the allegiance of his audience to this 'tried Mother' Church by sustaining her in tribulations, avoiding both sin and the snares of

1 González Salinero, *Poder*, 115.

2 S3 13. 1–2 (CCL 60: 363).

3 CIPA 22. 3–4 (CCL 60: 257).

4 S1 2 (CCL 60: 307–310).

5 S2 4. 12 (CCL 60: 339).

6 CIPA 22. 4–6; S3 13. 4 (CCL 60: 237, 363); Whelan, *Being Christian*, 33.

7 CIPA 22. 12–13; AQH 7. 43 (CCL 60: 258, 300): *catholicam ... unitatem; fidei unitatem scindit*. See also TB1 8. 7 (CCL 60: 436).

8 Peper, 202.

9 Peper, 210 suggests that Quodvultdeus perhaps understood the Church and its maternity 'in a more terrestrial and visibly demarcating fashion than did Augustine'.

heresies.¹⁰ The theological concepts of motherhood, virginity, and being the spouse also point to the integrity, purity, and exclusivity of the Church and it has, therefore, not only proclamatory but also protective function.¹¹ Quodvultdeus is convinced that the heretics battle against the 'true Mother',¹² the persecutions that the Church encounters make her follow in the sufferings of Christ and make an occasion for the spouse of Christ to prove her fidelity.¹³

With the exclusive maternity of the Church, the concept of the Church's unity is connected. Quodvultdeus's understanding of the unity of Christ present in the Head and in the members (*totus Christus*) leads him to the conclusion that whoever departs from the Church's teaching or from the Christian way of life, as taught by the Church, becomes not only separated from the Church, but also from Christ.¹⁴ Whoever disturbs this unity commits an iniquity and will be rejected by the Lord as someone he does not know.¹⁵ Conversely, it is this 'catholic unity', the unity of the faith that Quodvultdeus tries to promote and keep: the Bridegroom seeks the Church-Bride who loves unity.¹⁶ This unity is also evoked ritually by the *competentes* during the scrutiny when they renounce together, 'with one heart and one voice' the devil, his pomps, and angels with one voice: 'I renounce!'¹⁷

It is not necessary to explain Quodvultdeus's interest in reaffirming the unity of the Church and its faith with the fragmentation of the Empire when religious unity would become an important issue.¹⁸ With the rise of the monarchical episcopate, it became the task of the bishops to take care for the unity of the Church, both universal and local. Being a Catholic bishop in fifth-century Africa, it was inevitable to be influenced by the previous century of a struggle for the unity of the Church with the Donatists,¹⁹ which brought the bishops to observe that it was not enough that someone calls himself Catholic and denies being a heretic.²⁰ Moreover, Quodvultdeus's cooperation with Augustine in the

10 A2 12. 2 (CCL 60: 468).

11 Peper, 213.

12 S1 13. 6 (CCL 60: 334).

13 A2 13. 2; UQF 5. 24 (CCL 60: 469, 402).

14 CIPA 22. 1–3 (CCL 60: 236 f.).

15 CN 9. 2–3 (CCL 60: 391 f.); Matthew 7:22–23.

16 UQF 6. 3 (CCL 60: 403).

17 A1 2. 4, 7; 3. 1 (CCL 60: 442).

18 González Salinero, *Poder*, 111.

19 Robin Whelan, 'African Controversy: The Inheritance of the Donatist Schism in Vandal Africa', *JEH* 65/3 (2014), 504–521.

20 Michel-Yves Perrin, 'The Limits of the Heresiological Ethos in Late Antiquity', in *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*, ed. D.M. Gwynn and S. Bangert (Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2010), 214. An echo of this can be found even in A1 10. 2, 7; 12. 1; AQH 7. 39 (CCL 60: 449 f., 299).

investigation of the heretics in Carthage in the 410s and 420s, and his request addressed to Augustine to compose the treatise *De haeresibus* for the instruction of the clergy of Carthage, demonstrates how difficult for him it was, already before he was consecrated a bishop, to bear the division of the Church.²¹

As it had not always been easy for the Christians—and especially the new ones—to discern the particularities of diverse Christian groups, the bishops put much effort into helping their catechumens to define themselves as belonging to the Church, which claimed to have the true doctrine and to follow Christ faithfully. Quodvultdeus used his pre-baptismal catecheses for this as well: the *competentes* experienced this very tangibly during the scrutiny and handing over the creed, the rites that empowered them to change their allegiance; they did not belong anymore to the realm of the devil, his pomps, and his angels, but to Christ the Humble whose school they attended during their catechumenate, who was invoked over them during the scrutiny,²² and who was unknown to the heretics.²³

The bishop even conceives the sacraments as a weapon that arms the *competentes* and baptised against the devil, his angels, and pomps that they have renounced; amongst these were also the heretical groups.²⁴ The sacrament of the creed is an ‘antidote’ against the venom of the serpent-devil,²⁵ for whom the great sacrament of the cross is not accessible,²⁶ as it remains invisible also for those who have the devil’s attitude.²⁷ Not even the heretics, such as Arians rebaptising the Catholics, can access the great sacrament of the ‘piety’ that is in the Church;²⁸ and that would be true also for other religious groups. In the figure of Michal, Quodvultdeus captures the incapacity to understand the typological meaning and the power of the naked Christ on the cross.²⁹ Quodvultdeus’s mystagogy also has the function to create ‘antibodies’ in the *competentes’* souls to be immune to anything that is not the right teaching of Christ, entrusted to the only Church.

It is possible to see how difficult it was for Quodvultdeus to perceive the presence of various heretical groups which threatened, according to him, the

21 See p. 59 above.

22 CN 8. 8; A1 1. 6, 8; S1 1. 5 (CCL 60: 391, 441, 305).

23 A2 10–11 (CCL 60: 466–468).

24 S1 1. 11 (CCL 60: 306).

25 A1 2. 1 (CCL 60: 441).

26 S3 5. 11 (CCL 60: 356).

27 UQF 5. 9 (CCL 60: 401).

28 UQF 6. 25 (CCL 60: 405).

29 A2 4. 3 (CCL 60: 461).

flock entrusted to him.³⁰ However, it was not only that: any minister of the Church who has ever prepared others for baptism and initiated them into the mysteries of Christ understands the worries of the bishop who fears that his labour might be in vain. Quodvultdeus, likened to a spiritual gardener called to 'the Lord's farming',³¹ who was aware of the fragility of the first sproutings, had serious concerns for his *competentes*: 'But you, faithful seeds of the Holy Mother, the Catholic Church, scattered throughout the whole world, flee from all heresies.'³² Moreover, he does not hesitate to threaten the heretics who would approach them with their teaching: 'let him be anathema.'³³

With the Vandal invasion, the enemy of the Catholics in Roman Africa took not only a spiritual shape but also that of a political and economic enemy. To be part of the Catholic Church constituted an obvious threat not only to the believer's faith and spiritual good, but also to his status, property, and life. Yet, it comes as a surprise that catechumens were preparing for baptism in the endangered Catholic Church just before the capture of Carthage in 439. Their major part could possibly have been those who had been catechumens since their childhood like Augustine, and who finally, in the light of the aforementioned dangers, decided to be baptised and have the assured hope for salvation and eternal life. It was Quodvultdeus's task to prepare them for entering the Church, but also for persevering in their Catholic faith and Christian conduct. It should not be a surprise that the bishop uses defining the enemy, consisting of pagan idolatry, the Jewish religion, and heretical doctrines, as a means to strengthen and build up the identity of the newcomers to the Church at such a distressing hour.

Consequently, I am convinced that Quodvultdeus's explosive anti-heretical rhetorics does not have, due to the baptismal and catechetical context, primarily a polemical purpose, but rather a formative one. In this way, he welds together the future baptised with the Catholic Church and helps them identify themselves with her teaching that alone leads to the eternal life they desire. To illustrate this character of Quodvultdeus's catechesis, I am going to show how Quodvultdeus delimits the boundaries of the Church to which they belong, especially in connection to the way they renounced the devil, his pomps, and angels. Thus, I will start by showing that the renunciation of the heresies makes up part of the spiritual struggle of Christian believers with the devil and his

30 S3 9. 10–11; UQF 6. 29–7. 1 (CCL 60: 361, 405).

31 UQF 1. 4 (CCL 60: 395): *dominica agricultura*.

32 CN 10. 1 (CCL 60: 392): *Vos autem, fidelia germina sanctae matris Ecclesiae catholicae per uniuersum mundum diffusae, fugite omnes haereses*.

33 CN 10. 1 (CCL 60: 392): *anathema sit*.

realm. Next, I will examine how Quodvultdeus portrays the Church in the background of various heresies and how he uses the maternity of the Church and her spousal relationship with Christ to foster the believer's allegiance to the Church. The bishop's unyielding anti-heretical language shall be examined to see why and how he uses it. The attention then moves to various heretical groups against whom Quodvultdeus warns his audience: the Manichaeans, Donatists and other schismatics, Pelagians, Sabellians, and especially the Arians. To these heresies, also the Jews and pagans have to be added, as it is also against them that Quodvultdeus repeatedly speaks in his pre-baptismal catecheses. It is, however, much more against the wrong beliefs that the heretics, Jews, and pagans represent than against them as such that Quodvultdeus speaks, looking forward to bringing those whose concepts differ from the Catholic doctrine back to the Mother Church.

1 The Devil and His Pumps

Similarly to Augustine, Quodvultdeus does not consider the Church only a human institution, a political or sociological entity of those who share the same faith and religious practice.³⁴ For him, 'the Church is of a spiritual nature', as it is 'the Bride of Christ'.³⁵ This has serious consequences for understanding Quodvultdeus's delimitation of the Church's boundaries against those he calls 'enemies of Christ'.³⁶ He does not encourage any political insurrection against the new rulers of Africa, despite the cruelties and the danger he sees for his spiritual children. He instead envisions the Church as journeying through this *saeculum* where she encounters various adversities and adversaries that are also of a spiritual nature.³⁷ Among these, a prominent place belongs to the devil, to whom belongs his pumps and his angels that, in order to be reborn from the womb of the Mother Church, the *competentes* were meant to renounce at the scrutiny and to avoid the trappings of the worldly life. The theological concept of the motherhood of the Church also plays here a significant role in delimiting the boundaries of the Church given her adversaries or enemies.

While explaining the rite of the scrutiny, Quodvultdeus turns to the use of an allegorical reading of the image of Revelation 12:1–4 where 'the dragon stood in full view of the woman about to give birth, in order that when she

34 Emilien Lamirande, 'Ecclesia', in AL 2 (1996–2002), 692.

35 S3 13. 2 (CCL 60: 363): *Ecclesia mater est spiritalis: ecclesia sponsa Christi est.*

36 CIPA 10. 12; 12. 1; 16. 2; 18. 10 (CCL 60: 241 f., 248, 253).

37 A1 11. 1 (CCL 60: 450).

gave birth, he would eat the children born of her'.³⁸ Where the listeners, and specifically the *competentes*, are the 'children' in danger of being eaten by 'the dragon', Quodvultdeus identifies the dragon with the devil and 'the virgin signifies Mary, the chaste one, who gave birth to our chaste head', that is, to Christ.³⁹ The Virgin Mary 'embodies in herself', according to the bishop and the ancient exegetical tradition, 'a figure of the holy Church'.⁴⁰ In this way, the Church as chaste mother virgin is put in contrast with the devil, whom the *competentes* were to renounce before and at their baptism. The boundaries set regarding the Church, therefore, are set as a protective means for the Church's 'children'.⁴¹ The mystagogical method Quodvultdeus uses in his catechesis does not only make clear that it is the devil against whom the rite is set and encourage the audience to abandon the devil, his pomps and angels,⁴² but he also makes clear that they themselves make up part of the same story as narrated in Revelation 12 and of the great historical struggle between Christ and his adversary.

However, for Quodvultdeus, it was not only a moral issue of vices and virtues: it was also a spiritual struggle with the author of the vice and of the lie himself, namely the devil. As 'all of this life here is a temptation'⁴³ and the 'pomps of the devil' that the candidates renounced at the scrutiny are all of the 'illicit desires',⁴⁴ to remain in the Church makes up part of the keeping of the inheritance they are to receive from the Father: 'no one will have God as a Father who does not want to have the Church as his Mother'.⁴⁵ The renunciation of the 'devil, his pomps, and angels' makes up, therefore, part of the constructing of the defensive boundaries of the Church as well.⁴⁶

Quodvultdeus describes the devil as 'the angel who was separated from God because of his pride', who abhors the truth and is, in fact, the author of lies; because he deceived himself, he longs to deceive others as well.⁴⁷ As the truth

38 S3 1. 4 (CCL 60: 349; tr. Finn 67): *quod staret draco in conspectu mulieris quae paritura erat, ut cum peperisset, natum eius comederet.*

39 S3 1. 5 (CCL 60: 349; tr. Finn 67): *mulierem illam uirginem Mariam significasse, quae caput nostrum integra integrum peperit.*

40 S3 1. 6 (CCL 60: 349; tr. Finn 67 f.): *ipsa figuram in se sanctae Ecclesiae demonstrauit.*

41 CIPA 3. 8 (CCL 60: 230).

42 S1 1. 9–11 (CCL 60: 305 f.).

43 S1 10. 13 (CCL 60: 331): *tota haec uita temptatio est.*

44 S2 1. 4 (CCL 60: 335): *illicita desideria.*

45 S3 13. 1 (CCL 60: 263): *nec habebit Deum Patrem, qui Ecclesiam noluit habere matrem*; see also S2 12. 10; CIPA 3. 4 (CCL 60: 348, 230).

46 S1 1. 11; S2 1. 3; S3 1. 21; CIPA 1. 10; 3. 1, 8; A1 4. 13; QVC 8. 1; L 1. 36. 52 (CCL 60: 306, 335, 350 f., 228–230, 444, 373, 61).

47 CIPA 2. 2 (CCL 60: 228).

is not only an intellectual concept, Quodvultdeus can, analogically, affirm that the devil is also the author of sin, and it is eventually he who separates man from God and brings him to ruin.⁴⁸ For that reason, the bishop calls him 'the inventor of death, the founder of pride, the root of malice, the head of wickedness, the chief of all vices, the persuader of vile desires'.⁴⁹ The devil's jealousy of man created in God's image made him strip the first parents of all their talents and virtues—of their chastity, continence, charity, and immortality—to leave them naked, bring them to slavery, leave them with shamelessness, intemperance, evil, and death, being susceptible to sin.⁵⁰ In this way, the devil deprived humankind of what he himself had lost, so that they were separated from God.⁵¹ Using his enticement and cunning, the devil still captures men and women in the present times who are too weak to resist him, using pleasure and fear.⁵²

Quodvultdeus makes the devil part of the mystagogical presentation of baptism when he uses the typology of the exodus from Egypt. Where Moses is the *figura* of the Lord Jesus and the Red Sea that of baptism, Pharaoh with his people represents the devil and his servants. Baptism thus has the power to destroy all of this Pharaoh, his servants, and pomps.⁵³ However, the devil is not renounced only with one's voice, but also with his way of life.⁵⁴

It was not only the devil the *competentes* renounced but also his 'pomps'. Among these, there were the sinful desires, sins, and vices, as intemperance, avarice, anger, or pride.⁵⁵ As not only the candidates for baptism were present at his sermons, Quodvultdeus also addressed the already baptised Christians. For both groups, a word about the Christian life after baptism in view of the renounced devil and his pomps was valid. He had to make clear that the baptism does not protect the believers against any temptation brought about by the adversary's enticement and cunning; nonetheless, the baptism would strengthen and fortify their souls.⁵⁶ Life after baptism engages the Christian automatically in a spiritual fight with this 'ancient enemy' starting with one's

48 S2 2. 3–4; S3 5. 5 (CCL 60: 228f., 356).

49 CIPA 2. 3 (CCL 60: 228): *Iste aduersarius effectus est generis humani, inuentor mortis, superbiae institutor, radix malitiae, scelerum caput, princeps omnium uitiorum, persuasor etiam turpium uoluptatum.*

50 CIPA 2. 4–6 (CCL 60: 228f.).

51 S2 2. 3 (CCL 60: 335).

52 S1 1. 15–16; A1 3. 2 (CCL 60: 306, 442).

53 C 3. 22–24 (CCL 60: 412).

54 S3 1. 11 (CCL 60: 350).

55 CIPA 4. 5 (CCL 60: 231).

56 S1 1. 15; C 1. 2; A1 6. 8–10 (CCL 60: 306, 409, 445f.).

way of life that follows and loves Christ the Way in his humility, not pretending that one can live according to the Gospel by his own strength but by God's grace.⁵⁷

The sinful desires make, according to Quodvultdeus, man go astray and worship idols: Quodvultdeus links, in this way, a sinful way of life with idolatry and pagan worship.⁵⁸ Among these illicit desires, Quodvultdeus dedicates much room to the Carthaginians' love for the games at the amphitheatre.⁵⁹ It has already been mentioned that the circus of Carthage, the largest structure in North Africa, continued to be operational and to be heavily attended even throughout the Vandal reign.⁶⁰ Quodvultdeus's endless admonishments not to attend the games and not to be caught in this devil's 'mousetrap' witness to the fact that the Christians of Carthage still continued to attend there even in the distressing times of the imminent Vandal danger or even after their capture of Carthage.⁶¹ The motherhood of the Church, with her care to nourish her children, is set by Quodvultdeus also against the practice of the civic spectacles: it is the 'Mother Church' which provides for her children the 'venerable and salutary spectacles' of Christ's Passion, being much more attractive than the famous games in the amphitheatre of Carthage.⁶² In fact, Christ's death, in the end, brought the end of the devil's menace which threatened death, and proposed eternal life instead, which was now available to those who renounced the devil and were baptised.⁶³

The authenticity of the Christian life is for Quodvultdeus as important as the coherence of the believer's beliefs. That is why he warns against a lukewarm or half-hearted approach to the Christian way of life, especially after baptism. In this way, he sets a boundary of the Church that should defend his members from the spiritual enemy, the devil, using an effort to live according to the Gospel, relying on God's grace. The ongoing discussion about the 'semi-Christians' in the world of Late Antiquity would confirm the way Quodvultdeus tried to bring those who did not embrace Christianity whole-heartedly to the 'womb' of the one and only Mother Church.⁶⁴

57 S3 1. 12; C 2. 4; A1 1. 8; 2. 1 (CCL 60: 350, 410, 441f.).

58 S2 2. 6 (CCL 60: 336).

59 CIPA 4. 8; S1 2. 1 (CCL 60: 231f., 307).

60 Naomi Norman, 'Excavations in the Circus of Carthage', *Archaeology* 40 (1987), 46–57; Clover, 10f.; Peper, 208f.

61 S1 1. 19; 2. 2, 4; S2 1. 4; S3 1. 13; C 2. 7; A1 3. 2; 5. 4; TB1 1. 11; 3. 19; TB2 2. 6 (CCL 60: 307, 335, 350, 410, 442, 444, 424, 427, 474).

62 S1 2. 2; A2 6. 12 (CCL 60: 307, 463); Peper, 209.

63 S2 2. 1; S3 5. 2–5 (CCL 60: 356, 356).

64 Charles Guignebert, 'Les démi-chrétiens et leur place dans l'Église antique', RHR 88 (1923),

2 The Church Facing Various Religious Groups

It was not only the devil and sin that threatened the believers' remaining inside the 'Mother Church', but also his servants, identified by Quodvultdeus with many religious groups in Carthage that appealed to the religious interest and needs of the city population. The existence of various heresies was a reality, although they, obviously, did not call themselves heresies: it was always the others who did it for them,⁶⁵ starting the with New Testament authors.⁶⁶ Quodvultdeus warns unceasingly about heresies and other religious groups, especially the Jews and pagans, as he is convinced that they can take advantage of them and rob them of the object of their shared desire, that is, Christ and eternal life.

The legislation of Theodosius set the Christianity confessed by Peter as the privileged belief of the Roman people and their emperors.⁶⁷ At that time, the life of the Jews started to be regulated in relation to Christians.⁶⁸ The efforts of the pagan nobility in Rome under the leadership of Symmachus and Praetextatus in the 380s were brought to an end by Theodosius's victory at the river

65–102; Gerald Bonner, 'The extinction of Paganism and the Church Historian', *JEH* 35 (1984), 339–357; Markus, *End of Ancient Christianity*, 14 f.; Averil Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 176 f.; Rebillard, *Christians*, 94 f.

65 Brent D. Shaw, 'African Christianity: Disputes, definitions and "Donatists"', in *Orthodoxy and heresy in religious movements: Discipline and dissent*, ed. M.R. Greenshields, T.A. Robinson, and M.J. Penton (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 8; Caroline Humfress, *Orthodoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 238–242; Averil Cameron, 'The Violence of Orthodoxy', in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. E. Iricinschi and H.M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 107; and Whelan, *Being Christian*, 55, who also mentions exceptions to this rule, that is, abjurations of Christians on their point of conversion to the right faith.

66 Heinrich Schlier, 'αἵρεσμαι, αἵρεσις, αἱρετικός, αἱρετίζω, διαίρέω, διαίρεσις', in *ThWNT* 1 (1966), 181 f. Without a struggle with conflicting views, the Christian doctrines on God and Christ would have never found their poignant expression, as the history of theology shows: see 1 Corinthians 11:19, cited also in L 1. 12. 19; 2. 6. 10 (CCL 60: 26, 80); Whelan, *Being Christian*, 55.

67 *CTh* 16. 1. 2 (SC 497: 114 dated 27th Feb 380) is addressed to the people of Constantinople. The impact of this legislation is examined by Jean Gaudemet, 'L'Edit de Thessalonique: police locale ou déclaration de principe?', in *Aspects of the Fourth Century A.D. Proceedings of the symposium Power & possession: State, society, and church in the fourth century A.D. held on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the interdisciplinary debating society AGAPE. Leiden, 3–5 June 1993*, ed. H.W. Pleket and A.M.F.W. Verhoogt (Leiden: AGAPE, 1997), 43–51 and María Victoria Escribano Paño, 'El Edicto de Tesalónica (*CTh* 16, 1, 2. 380) y Teodosio: norma antiarriana y declaración programática', *Cassiodorus* 5 (1999), 35–64. This chapter develops my previous research: Vopřada, 'Reassessment'.

68 *CTh* 16. 5. 44, 46 (SC 497: 296, 298; dated 408 and 15th Jan 409); 16. 8. 19 (SC 497: 396–398; dated 1st Jan 409).

Frigidus in 396.⁶⁹ Indeed, Arianism seemed to have been defeated at the councils of Constantinople and Aquileia in 381. Still, these groups survived through the fifth century, as the many polemical writings of Augustine bear witness.⁷⁰ Moreover, this legislation seems to have brought the various dissenting groups into an alliance.⁷¹ Both Ambrose and Augustine depict the Church as surrounded by these 'enemies of the faith'.⁷² This tense religious atmosphere must have become even more heated when the Arian Vandals arrived to conquer Africa, using violence against the majority of the Roman and Catholic population.⁷³ Even under their rule, numerous heresies survived in Africa:⁷⁴ among others, Asclepius,⁷⁵ Vigilus of Thapsus,⁷⁶ Cerealis of *Castellum Ripense*,⁷⁷ Eugenius of Carthage,⁷⁸ and especially Fulgentius of Ruspe⁷⁹ wrote against or disputed with the Arians, Donatists, Sabellians, Photinians, or Eutychians in the course of the fifth and sixth centuries.

Quodvultdeus's anti-heretical discourse is therefore not at all unique in the African context. This bishop considers them primarily a spiritual reality because their existence is caused by the devil who lures men to desert the God who is true and eternal life.⁸⁰ Those who abandoned God did not remain also in the unity of the Church: they are outside, they are heretics who wander long from the way and act.⁸¹ What is more, for Quodvultdeus, the heretics are not part of the Church, that is, of that inheritance that the *competentes* received in the scrutiny and in the giving of the creed. They make up, instead, a part of the domain of the devil: any other worship than that of the almighty God, as professed in the creed, is a way the devil fashions idols in the hearts of Christians.⁸² The heresies also have their space in the whole of the history of salvation: the

69 Cameron, *Last Pagans*, 93–131.

70 Maria Grazia Mara, 'Arriani', in AL 1 (1986–1994), 450–459 and bibliography listed there.

71 Michel Meslin, *Les Ariens d'Occident*, 335–430 (Paris: Université, 1967), 331–335; Lellia Cracco Ruggini, 'Ambrogio e le opposizioni anticattoliche fra il 383 e il 390', *Aug* 14 (1974), 424; Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 44 f.

72 Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 419–429.

73 See also p. 51–56 above.

74 See the list of heresies in Aug. *haer.* cap. (CCL 46: 283–285).

75 Genn. *vir. ill.* 73 (ed. Bernoulli 86); Maier, 258; PCBE i. 95.

76 Maier, 443; PCBE i. 1204 f.

77 Genn. *vir. ill.* 93 (ed. Bernoulli 93); PCBE i. 207.

78 Genn. *vir. ill.* 94 (ed. Bernoulli 93 f.); PCBE i. 362–365.

79 Maier, 326.

80 S2 2. 3, 5 (CCL 60: 335 f.).

81 A2 11. 2; CN 9. 1 (CCL 60: 467, 391).

82 S1 4. 34 (CCL 60: 316).

heresies were foretold by the Spirit⁸³ and they are a sign of the imminent end; in fact, the heretics are precursors of the Antichrist.⁸⁴ This eschatological perspective shows that the struggle with heresies is conceived by Quodvultdeus primarily as a spiritual one and while he is motivated to 'strengthen communal adhesion',⁸⁵ it is in the prospect of eternal life that he does so.⁸⁶

Quodvultdeus contrasts the existence of various religious groups with the already-mentioned concept of the exclusive motherhood of the Church:⁸⁷ joining them would also affect one's eschatological reward, as without the true mother the believers cannot receive the promised inheritance.⁸⁸ This exclusivity of salvation, attainable only as part of the Catholic Church, explains the numerous warnings to avoid any teaching that is outside the boundaries set by the creed, for it is the sacrament of baptism, as well as keeping the Church's doctrine expressed in the creed, that distinguishes those who are within the Catholic Church.⁸⁹ In this understanding, Quodvultdeus follows his African precursors, especially Cyprian and Augustine, and the concept of the maternity of the Church serves well to demarcate the boundaries of the Church, especially in relationship to numerous heretical groups.⁹⁰ The anti-heretical parts of Quodvultdeus's discourses remain in the footsteps of earlier heresiological writings, where the heresiology was 'a genre for asserting true Christian doctrine'.⁹¹

3 Polemical Language of Quodvultdeus's Sermons

Quodvultdeus's sermons are in modern scholarship considered highly polemical, targeting all non-Catholic religious groups present in his day in Africa, in particular, the Pagans, Jews, and Arians.⁹² The bishop's sermons contain violent

83 CIPA 7. 3 (CCL 60: 235).

84 L D. 5. 7 (CCL 60: 194); Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 128.

85 Whelan, *Being Christian*, 63.

86 Quodvultdeus was quite sceptical of the Roman Empire that he condemned as the apocalyptic Whore of Babylon, which would confirm the notion: L D. 7. 14 (CCL 60: 199); Jesse A. Hoover, *The Donatist Church in an Apocalyptic Age* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 225.

87 See pp. 224–230 above.

88 CN 10. 1 (CCL 60: 392).

89 S1 13. 11–13 (CCL 60: 334).

90 Peper, 210.

91 J. Rebecca Lyman, 'Heresiology: The Invention of "Heresy" and "Schism"', in *The Cambridge History of Christianity. Vol. 2: Constantine to c. 600*, ed. A. Casiday and F.W. Norris (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 296.

92 Morin, 'Pour une future édition', 156 and other researchers who have followed him.

and uncompromising attacks on these non-Catholic groups. This portrayal of Quodvultdeus as an anti-heretical polemist is believed to correspond with his previous interest in heresies during the 410s and 420s.⁹³ R. González Salinero approaches the anti-heretical language of Quodvultdeus's discourses regarding the historical situation of the Catholic Church in North Africa after the long struggle with the Donatists during the fourth and fifth centuries, where the Church put considerable effort into the struggle with the heresies. What is more, at least since the Conference of Carthage in 411, it relied on collaboration from the civic authorities to coerce heretics in order to maintain the unity of the Church.⁹⁴ M. Pignot sees these anti-heretical polemics as 'a noteworthy demonstration of the context of competition through preaching among religious communities in late antiquity Africa' and from this perspective he concludes that 'the period of preparation for baptism was meant to inculcate in candidates a sense of their exclusive religious identity and at the same time reinforce the boundaries of the whole community'.⁹⁵ From this viewpoint, the invectives thrown against Quodvultdeus's religious opponents would not be aimed towards a public dispute with them to bolster up the Catholic faith of the *competentes*, making sure that they seek salvation and eternal life only in the Catholic Church.

The language Quodvultdeus uses when speaking about heretics, especially Arians, is unyielding. He does not baulk at calling them 'insane',⁹⁶ 'unlearned', 'stupid',⁹⁷ 'mad',⁹⁸ 'impious',⁹⁹ or 'blasphemous'.¹⁰⁰ He even addresses them using an apostrophe: 'O evil wolf, o wicked serpent! O wretched servant!'¹⁰¹ He speaks about their ever-growing 'excesses'¹⁰² and accuses them of deceiving true Christians with flattering words.¹⁰³ He compares them to 'dogs raging' against the Lord, who, in their lack of awareness of divine things, insult Christ's humility by lifting up their necks and vibrating their tongues.¹⁰⁴ He charges

93 Sydney Sadowski, 'A Critical Look and Evaluation of Augustine's *De haeresibus*', *Aug* 55/2 (2015), 461–478.

94 González Salinero, *Poder*, 72.

95 Pignot, 'Catechuminate', 211.

96 CIPA 5. 6 (CCL 60: 234): *insane haeretice*.

97 A1 13. 1 (CCL 60: 451): *insipientes ... stulti*.

98 C 5. 2 (CCL 60: 414): *haereticos ... dementes*.

99 S1 9. 9 (CCL 60: 327): *impij sunt*.

100 CIPA 19. 2 (CCL 60: 254): *Arriani blasphemantes*.

101 S1 13. 6 (CCL 60: 334): *O lupe male! o serpens inique! o serue nequissime!*

102 CIPA 19. 3 (CCL 60: 254): *sentisne quo progressa fuerit immanitas tua?*

103 CIPA 19. 7 (CCL 60: 255).

104 A1 8. 13 (CCL 60: 447).

them for their abuse of the Mother Church,¹⁰⁵ labels them ‘persecutors’,¹⁰⁶ and speaks of their ‘malevolent’ spirit.¹⁰⁷ He describes them as ‘thieves’, ‘robbers’, ‘the most wretched wolf-abductors’, and posing a danger for the sheep of the supreme shepherd,¹⁰⁸ as they threaten the believers with the ‘devious jaws of the thieves’¹⁰⁹ who try to steal the sheep that belong to the one flock and one Shepherd.¹¹⁰ In his view, congregations that ‘lurk in the corner of any heresy’ are ‘concubines’, women divorced from Christ;¹¹¹ their integrity was taken away and they cannot be called his bride anymore.¹¹² The Catholic ‘brethren’ should carefully avoid heretical doctrines, these ‘crafty devices of wolves’¹¹³ taught ‘in hiding, in secret’¹¹⁴ in their ‘sly dens’.¹¹⁵ He even questions the reasoning of the Arians by describing their ways through the words of the psalm: ‘The impious walk in circles.’¹¹⁶ Their teachings and the attitudes of these ‘worst sects of heretics’—that is, ‘the Manichaeian delusions’, ‘Pelagian depravity’, ‘Arian arrogant congregations’¹¹⁷—are not only ‘grave errors separating one from Catholic doctrine’,¹¹⁸ but also ‘perverse’,¹¹⁹ the ‘crafty devices of wolves’,¹²⁰ and ‘mad obstinacy’.¹²¹ They ‘turn with squinty eyes’ towards false interpretation of the Scripture, which receives their ‘mind’s perverse attention’.¹²² They are portrayed as unable to accept with faith the right doctrine of the Church: they are, in fact, ‘unbelievers’.¹²³

105 S1 13. 4 (CCL 60: 334).

106 S3 4. 19 (CCL 60: 355): *persequentes*.

107 S1 4. 32 (CCL 60: 316): *maliuolam animam*.

108 S3 9. 11 (CCL 60: 361).

109 CN 10. 8 (CCL 60: 392; tr. Heintz 48): *deuias fauces latronum*.

110 C 6. 2 (CCL 60: 418).

111 S3 13. 4 (CCL 60: 363).

112 CIPA 22. 9 (CCL 60: 257).

113 S3 9. 10 (CCL 60: 361): *doctrinas haereticorum ... insidias luporum*.

114 CN 6. 8 (CCL 60: 387): *in absconso, in occulto*.

115 CIPA 22. 5 (CCL 60: 257): *spelunca subdola*. See also A2 12. 2 (CCL 60: 468).

116 S1 9. 9 (CCL 60: 327): *In circuitu impii ambulant* (Psalm 11:9).

117 UQF 6. 2 (CCL 60: 403): *scholae pessimae haereticorum, fraus Manichaeorum, nequitia Pelagianorum, superba congregatio Arrianorum*.

118 S3 9. 9 (CCL 60: 361): *malus error a catholica doctrina separans*.

119 S1 4. 18; 4. 32 (CCL 60: 314, 316): *peruersam uestram doctrinam; peruersis quae sunt in uobis*; see also S2 2. 5; S3 3. 11; C 5. 27; A1 14. 5 (CCL 60: 336, 353, 417, 453).

120 S3 9. 10 (CCL 60: 361): *insidias luporum*.

121 CIPA 5. 5 (CCL 60: 234): *insana contumacia*.

122 S1 4. 15 (CCL 60: 314; Finn 31): *quo strabis oculis intendas, quo peruersae mentis aciem intentionis dirigas*.

123 S1 5. 5 (CCL 60: 317): *incredule*; see also S1 5. 2 (CCL 60: 317).

The unyielding language Quodvultdeus uses was not uncommon in the first Christian centuries, especially in the context of other contemporary works on the creed that make up part of the baptismal preparation.¹²⁴ Ambrose in his *Explanatio symboli* claims that altering the text of the creed is characteristic of the heretic,¹²⁵ a violation of the limits of the faith. In mentioning them, he edifies the faith his audience receives by delimiting it to the teaching of the Apostles. Similarly, Rufinus's *Expositio symboli* shows the Apostles' Creed contrasted not only pagans, but other heretics also, and their views are presented in order to expound the meaning of the creed.¹²⁶ Although Augustine does not mention heresies by name in his *De fide et symbolo*, the references to heretic doctrines that 'poison' the faith expressed in the creed are still present in nearly every commentary on the single articles of faith.¹²⁷ While *sermones* 212–215, given during the rites of *traditio* and *redditio symboli*, contain only very scarce remarks on the rejection by heretics, pagans, and Jews of the singular articles of faith.¹²⁸ his *De symbolo ad catechumenos* sets out to redress some of the views attributed to Catholic Christians by heretical groups and presents the Church as being surrounded by various heretical groups.¹²⁹ However, his statements point to the uniqueness and steadfastness of the Church, not directly against the heretics, and are used in support of the power of baptism imparted to the *competentes*.¹³⁰ Heretics and views incompatible with the faith are also frequent in the sermons on the creed (s. 55–62bis) preached by Peter Chrysologus in Ravenna in the mid-fifth century and the bishop does not hesitate to turn rhetorically to the heretics with a highly polemical tone to make the exposition more appealing to the candidates for baptism and to edify the audience.¹³¹

Therefore, it is evident that it was not exceptional to address heretics and other non-Catholic groups in the works related to the exposition or instruction of the creed. When trying to transmit the correct conception of the faith to the candidates for baptism and other Christian believers, it made sense to define

124 A vast range of examples is provided by Perrin, 202–211. For baptismal creeds, see Paul van Egmond, 'There and Back Again—A Creed's Tale. The Interaction between Baptismal (Mystagogical) and Polemical Creeds', in *Seeing through the Eyes of Faith: New Approaches to the Mystagogy of the Church Fathers*, ed. P. van Geest (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 203 f.

125 Ambr. *expl. symb.* 2 (SAEMO 17: 26–28).

126 Rufin. *expos. symb.* 37, 39 (CCL 20: 173, 175).

127 Aug. *f. et symb.* 1. 1; 2. 3; 3. 3; 4. 5; 4. 7–8; 6. 13; 7. 14; 9. 18–20; 10. 21.

128 For example, Aug. s. 215. 7 (PL 38: 1075 f.).

129 For example, Aug. *symb. cat.* 2. 4 (CCL 46: 187 f.).

130 Aug. *symb. cat.* 2. 5; 8. 16 (CCL 46: 189, 198 f.).

131 For example, Peter Chrysologus, s. 60. 4; 62. 9 (SCA 1. 404, 422). For a more detailed exposition on those authors, see Vopřada, 'Reassessment', 362–364.

the correct comprehension of faith even against the background of erroneous beliefs. Quodvultdeus's catechesis on the creed follows the tradition of creedal exposition espoused by the Latin Fathers of the era. All the same, though, his exposition also makes part of his mystagogical method to transmit the faith of the Church to the candidates of baptism and to enable them to see with their 'eyes of the faith' the reality, in which they live.

While there is little doubt why this stiff and, for the present-day ear offensive, language contributed to the depiction of Quodvultdeus as an anti-heretical polemicist, a more attentive reading of his argumentation against the heretics and other religious groups has to be employed.¹³² Quodvultdeus's anti-heretical rhetoric can be understood in its historical, religious, liturgical, and catechetical contexts.

The primary addressees of the discourses were the converts to the Catholic Christianity that came principally from the extremely vivid religious environment in fifth-century Carthage. They certainly had general cultural notions or even personal experience with the pagan cult and they probably even shared the polytheistic religious attitude towards the sacrifices and various festivities. They were aware of the presence of Jews and their worship, and maybe they felt even attracted towards their worship of one God and their customs. They also knew about the divisions and struggles at play amongst different Christian groups: Catholics, Donatists, and Arians, and they possibly did not miss out the Manichaeans. As with converts of any age they brought to the Church their understanding of religious truths and attitudes, of which Christian bishops such as Ambrose or Augustine were well aware, and which were not altogether compatible with the Christian faith and beneficial to Christian living.¹³³ Quodvultdeus as well must have faced this aspect when instructing the *competentes*, aware that he had to instruct the candidates thoroughly to avoid any misconceptions about the Christian notion of God. This is where his protracted exposition on the creed—present in S1–3, A1–2, and C1PA—comes in.

The baptismal creed that was handed over to the *competentes* some two weeks before their baptism offered a solid ground for such a transmission of the doctrine of the Church. Quodvultdeus conceived of the 'sacrament of the creed'¹³⁴ as a protection against the 'serpent's poison', that is, against various imperfect notions the bishop's audience would possibly encounter.¹³⁵ The

¹³² Vopřada, 'Reassessment', 358.

¹³³ Vopřada, *Mistagogia*, 305.

¹³⁴ S1 1. 9; S2 1. 1 (CCL 60: 306, 335).

¹³⁵ S3 1. 4; C 5. 2 (CCL 60: 349, 414).

choice of the creed was derived from the authority conveyed by the Church built upon the apostles;¹³⁶ it was, therefore, theologically rooted in Quodvultdeus's ecclesiological understanding of the unicity of the Church where integration in the Church is essential to the believer's salvation. Heresy damages and poisons the Church, present both in the Head and in the members, including also the *competentes* who renounced the devil and his servants and declared their allegiance to Christ the Head.¹³⁷ The confrontation with the heretics and the delimiting of the bond of the *competentes* to Christ and the Church alludes to the spiritual struggle they entered with the rites of the scrutiny and the *traditio symboli* and that they would seal in the baptismal rites as an expression of their baptismal metamorphosis. What the bishop does in his interpretation of the creed is to eliminate any discordant doctrinal and religious views on the fundamental concepts of God and the Church. Quodvultdeus's exposition on the creed can hardly be seen as set primarily in a polemical context, but rather an apologetical, liturgical, and catechetical one and these anti-heretical digressions in Quodvultdeus's exposition can be indeed more aptly defined as a 'genre for asserting true Christian doctrine'.¹³⁸

The liturgical and catechetical context also indicates that the sermons were not pronounced against the heretics in person. Indeed, Quodvultdeus's frequent use of the apostrophe—documented above—which he used to address the absent heretics, allowed him not only to 'teach' (*docere*) using rational arguments, but to fulfil the other two duties of the orator (*officia oratoris*): to 'entertain' (*delectare*) through the elegance of his speech, and to 'shake' them or 'fill them with indignation' (*mouere/flectere*) by unmasking opposing views. His orations on heresies (including the example of the struggle with a 'hermeneutical' heretic)¹³⁹ was therefore aimed at edifying the faith of those Christian believers present.¹⁴⁰

Quodvultdeus, similar to other Christian writers of the first centuries, employed fictive dialogue as part of his rhetorical strategy. His purpose was to present one's ideas about the corrupt or false views of the opponent and to present the much more logical and correct view of the preacher and his

136 S1 13. 1; S2 1. 1 (CCL 60: 333, 335).

137 CIPA 22. 2; S3 13. 5 (CCL 60: 256, 362).

138 Lyman, 296.

139 Franklin Harkins, 'Nuancing Augustine's Hermeneutical Jew: Allegory and Actual Jews in the Bishop's Sermons', *JSJ* 36/1 (2005), 41–64 states that Augustine did not compete with an actual Jew present at his preaching, but nevertheless reacted to the Jewish presence in Africa.

140 Van Slyke, 'Devil'.

Church's doctrine.¹⁴¹ His goal was to explain Catholic doctrine and to underline that only within the Catholic Church can one seek his or her salvation. The believer was encouraged to stay—no matter what—in the Church, despite many pressures to change ecclesiastical allegiance, and to 'persevere without fail'.¹⁴² The reason to foster this adherence to the Church is understandable only from the view of the faith that Quodvultdeus not only preached, but also believed: he encourages new Christians to 'believe in such a way that you might see what you desire'.¹⁴³ He is concerned with the faith of his audience and faith at work, a faith not limited to useless dogma but one that allows God and eternal life to be found. For this, it is necessary, according to Quodvultdeus's belief, to be part of the Church, that is, the Catholic Church, because whoever is not in the Church 'is able neither to love nor to hold [God] dear', for that person may never be 'with God, who is eternal life'.¹⁴⁴

When Quodvultdeus—in the context of the pre-baptismal catecheses—addresses the heretics as 'insane', 'unlearned', 'stupid', 'mad', 'impious', or 'blasphemous', he has in mind, in the first place, his audience. The message he wants to convey to them is the following: if they are to part with the Catholic faith and the Church, they themselves would become insane, stupid, mad, and blasphemous. The listener would definitely not want to become an 'evil wolf' or 'wretched servant' which were harshly criticised by the bishop. At the same time, he was also warned against the new rulers of Africa, who would be able to promise, in view of a change of the faith that the baptised would undergo, anything. Emphasising the contrast between the heretics and the Church and her doctrine, Quodvultdeus follows, in fact, ancient Christian catechesis in two ways.¹⁴⁵ The contrast between true faith and heresy is the same as that between truth and falsity, possession of faith and confusion, eternal sweetness and the worst bitterness, secure exultation and dangerous self-elation, life and death, joy and sorrow.¹⁴⁶ Such an approach is in service of the instruction, as it makes the presentation more accessible to the public.

141 Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), 12; Whelan, 'Surrogate Fathers', 19 f.

142 S2 13. 9 (CCL 60: 348): *secum perseuerantes indeficienter pascit*; see also S3 1. 7–8; 1. 14–16 (CCL 60: 349 f.).

143 S3 2. 1 (CCL 60: 351): *Sic crede, ut desideres uidere quod credis*.

144 S2 13. 6 (CCL 60: 348): *nec cum Deo est, qui aeterna uita est*.

145 CIPA 21. 1 ff. (CCL 60: 256); *Didache* 1–6; *Barn.* 18. 1–21. 1 (ed. Lindemann—Paulsen 4–12, 68–72).

146 CIPA 21. 1–3 (CCL 60: 256).

It can be also proposed that Quodvultdeus's theology can be reconstructed starting from his altercation with the heresies: what the heresies lack, that is the core of Quodvultdeus's theological views. In this negative way, Quodvultdeus teaches his doctrinal opinions, which are those of the Catholic Church, with his *competentes* and already baptised believers. Doing so, he instructs his assembly, and constructing a fictive situation helps his *competentes* and believers respond to the objections of their neighbours they were likely to meet:

A pagan asks: 'Where is your God?' A Jew also asks: 'Where is your Crucified?' A heretic asks: 'Where is your helper?' What shall I do? What should I answer to them?¹⁴⁷

Quodvultdeus points to the problem that it is impossible to show something invisible to someone who does not possess the eyes of faith. However, similarly, he searches for answers not only to those who seek the truth but also to those who taunt and insult the Catholic believers.¹⁴⁸ All of this is a sign that the bishop prepares his audience for a situation of adversity so that they will be able to stand fast in their religious persuasion. However, at the same time he does not forget to assert that it is only within the spousal relationship of the true Church-Bride and Christ-Bridegroom that it is possible to know God and attain the promised reward of eternal life.

The delimitation of the Church makes up, therefore, part of the mystagogical process.¹⁴⁹ Heresy, in fact, is that which does not allow us to enter into the mystery of Christ, operated in baptism, the Eucharist, and other sacraments of the Church in the life of the believer, because of a misunderstanding of some critical notions of the Trinity or of Christ, as will be shown in the next chapters. For instance, if the *competentes* were to share the Manichaeans' denial of the reality of Christ's Incarnation and, therefore, also of his salvific death on the cross, participation in the redemption acquired in their baptism through the blood of Christ would not be possible, but only fictive and phantasmal: noth-

147 A19.1–2 (CCL 60: 447f.): *Dicit paganus, ubi est Deus tuus? Dicit et Iudaeus, ubi est crucifixus tuus? Dicit haereticus, ubi est adiutor tuus? Quid faciam? quid eis respondeam?*

148 A19.2–3 (CCL 60: 448).

149 On the baptismal and polemical dimension of the creed, see Liuwe H. Westra, 'Rufinus and the Creed: New Viewpoints from an Old Witness? A Possible Mystagogical Use of the *Expositio Symboli*', in *Seeing through the Eyes of Faith*, 184–202 and van Egmond, 203–225.

ing would happen. Similarly, if they were not to profess Christ's divinity, as with the Arians, Christ would not have the power to cleanse them entirely in their baptism, as that is a capacity that belongs to God alone.

3.1 *Manichaeans*

The general attitude towards the heretics and other religious groups can be demonstrated with the diverse groups he presents in his pre-baptismal catechesis. Later, when he had been exiled to Campania and when he composed his *Liber promissionum*, he inserted into his treatise an allegorical interpretation of the various types of leprosy, as presented in Leviticus 13:46, where he makes a connection between these kinds of the disease and heresies.¹⁵⁰ First, there is leprosy on the head, which Quodvultdeus associates with the Manichaeans, as they maintain a dualism of two eternal principles of good and evil and contrast God with a 'principle of the darkness'.¹⁵¹

Manichaeism was still very much present in Africa in the fifth century:¹⁵² in a letter to deacon Quodvultdeus, Augustine asks if the Manichaeans discovered in 428 in Carthage were brought to the truth or if they were forced by the secular power to change their religious allegiance only apparently.¹⁵³ This testimony makes clear that Quodvultdeus had a personal experience with Manichaeans in Carthage at the brink of the 430s. Quodvultdeus's argumentation against them in his sermons implies that their presence in Carthage was not eliminated, although the bishop claims that there is not anymore the 'snake venom of the Manichaeans'.¹⁵⁴ It seems that they were not persecuted during the Vandal reign; their doctrine also seems to be nearer to the Arians than to

150 His inspiration in this allegory might have come from Orig. *HLv* 8. 5–11 (SC 287: 24–68) and Aug., *qu. eu.* 2. 40. 2 (CCL 44B: 97 f.), who saw in the kinds of leprosy an allegory of the typology of sin, but he could be directly inspired by the sermon entitled *De diversis generibus leprarum* (Ps.-Hier. *ep.* 34), where the leprosy on the head is explained in reference to the Manichaeans.

151 L 2. 6. 10 (CCL 60: 80).

152 The plausibility of Augustine's knowledge and description of Manichaeism is supported by the Codex Mani discovered at Cologne: Johannes Van Oort, 'Mani(chaeus)', in AL 3 (2004–2010), 1130; A. Henrichs, L. Koenen, and C. Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: über das Werden seines Leibes. Kritische Edition* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988).

153 Aug. *ep.* 222. 3 (CSEL 57: 448); Decret, *L'Afrique manichéenne*, i. 224–226.

154 CN 5. 9 (CCL 60: 415); Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 80. According to Decret, *L'Afrique manichéenne*, i. 226 f., after Quodvultdeus, other witnesses about their presence in Africa disappear: it is only Vigilius of Thapsus and Fulgentius of Ruspe who mention them again at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries.

the Catholic Christians professing the Nicene Creed¹⁵⁵ and the bishop still perceived them as a danger for his believers.¹⁵⁶

Similar to other heresies, Quodvultdeus accuses the Manichaeans of a 'fraud', falsehood, and internal inconsistency,¹⁵⁷ as they pretend to be the only true Christians who can nod to the single articles of the creed professed by the Catholic Christians and still hold a much different doctrine. In this way, in a fictive dialogue in A1, Quodvultdeus affirms that a Manichaean might assent: 'I am Christian because I believe in God the almighty,' while still making God the principle of light opposed by the eternal principle of the darkness.¹⁵⁸ The danger the bishop saw lay in their practice of using phrases that persuaded the Christians that their interlocutor shares with them much more than they would have thought and would make them much more open to dialogue and to their own beliefs, although they might be alien to Christianity.¹⁵⁹ That is also why Quodvultdeus shows to his *competentes* that the case of Manichaeism is much more complex and problematic than it might appear at first sight. Finding contradictions in the Manichaean doctrines also helps him bring forth arguments in favour of the doctrine he wants to present to his audience: showing the absurdity of Manichaean claims, he boosts the credibility of the Catholic doctrine.

An example of this approach can be provided by Quodvultdeus's exposition on the *Lux de lumine* in CIPA. He alerts us to the fact that these words of the Nicene Creed could be mistaken for the Manichaean doctrine of two luminaries or ships, described also by Augustine's *De haeresibus*: these two lights, consisting of a pure divine essence, that is, the Sun and the Moon, are meant to bring back the particles of light dispersed throughout the world.¹⁶⁰ Although he might not need to show the details of the Manichaean doctrine—perhaps its core could have been well known by his audience as a common cultural niveau—he focuses on the exposition of the relationship of the Father and the Son that are the objects of the words 'Light from Light'. The Father and the Son are not opposite principles but they are equal, their action is inseparable and they act together from the beginning of the world up to the present moment,

155 Courtois, 289–293; Decret, *L'Afrique manichéenne*, i, 227.

156 L D. 6. 12 (CCL 60: 198) attests also to their presence in Africa and also in Italy during the pontificate of Leo the Great.

157 UQF 6. 2; CN 6. 9–10 (CCL 60: 402, 387).

158 A1 10. 2–4 (CCL 60: 449).

159 Paradoxically, such a practice might be shared also by present Docetist movements, which share some traits with Manichaeism.

160 Aug. *haer.* 46. 6–8 (CCL 46, 314).

because 'the Father does everything by his Word'.¹⁶¹ The biblical evidence of this unity of the Father and the Son is provided by John 10:30: *I and Father are one*, the key verse of Augustine's theology that is directed not only against the Arians but generally against all Trinitarian heresies.¹⁶²

In his anti-Manichaean argumentation, Quodvultdeus's inspiration is Augustinian. In this way, he considers the Manichaean rejection of the Old Testament as self-contradictory, because the Old Testament Christological prophecies are quoted by New Testament books as fulfilled and they can be understood only in reference to Christ.¹⁶³ Quodvultdeus follows Augustine's (and generally patristic) tradition of the unity of the Old and New Testaments, as encapsulated in the dictum: *in uetere nouum lateat et in nouo uetus pateat*.¹⁶⁴ As the prophecies are the major argumentative material that is used by Quodvultdeus to defend the Catholic doctrine, he refuses to clear the ground and to limit himself only to the New Testament, accepted by the Manichaeans, when refuting their errors, especially regarding the Incarnation.¹⁶⁵

Quodvultdeus employs Augustine's assessment of the Manichaean docetist doctrine that denied the reality of Christ's humanity and considered Christ as just a spectre (*phantasma*) who came and suffered only in an apparent body¹⁶⁶ and uses also Augustine's argument based upon John 14. 6 that Christ, being the Truth, cannot lie and cannot be, therefore, considered only apparent as it would make all Christian teaching on God also only apparent.¹⁶⁷ The reality of Christ's human body and his activity is, therefore, a guarantee of the reality and truthfulness of all of Christ's teaching that he entrusted to his Church. Furthermore, Quodvultdeus contrasts the Manichaean denial of Christ's real humanity with the Jewish denial of Christ's divinity, finding his argumentation in the doctrine on the true divinity and humanity of Christ.¹⁶⁸ Concurrently, he brings forward reasons for Christ's humanity that have their soteriological and ecclesiological consequences. If Christ were a mere spectre, then he would not be able to really suffer and all the Old Testament prophecies about him would not be true, but false. Christ would not represent the fulfilment of the expectations of the chosen people and he would not die for the salvation of

161 CIPA 6. 1 (CCL 60: 233f.); *patrem per filium omnia facientem*.

162 CIPA 6. 3 (CCL 60: 234).

163 AQH 5. 7–9 (CCL 60: 277f.).

164 Aug. *qu.* 2. 73 (CCL 33: 106).

165 AQH 5. 3–6 (CCL 60: 277).

166 Aug. *haer.* 46. 15 (CCL 46: 317f.).

167 AI 10. 5–6 (CCL 60: 449).

168 CN 6. 1–7; AQH 4. 31; 5. 1 (CCL 60: 387, 274, 276); Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 80.

the world. At the same time, as a mere phantasm, he could not have handed over his Spirit on the cross to abide in his Church.¹⁶⁹ That is why Quodvultdeus calls Manichaeans ‘the worst of heretics’, because they question the veracity of Christ’s teaching and sacrifice of the cross.¹⁷⁰

In defending the teaching on the Incarnation and the real Christ’s humanity Quodvultdeus follows Augustine’s argumentation that used the Virgin Mary and the virginal birth.¹⁷¹ As Christ’s nativity did not violate Mary’s virginity, so his nativity did not blemish in any way his majesty or his divinity—which is what the Manichaeans objected to regarding the Catholics, who professed the reality of Christ’s humanity and birth. Childbirth and sexual intercourse were considered by the Manichaeans as something that defiles man and helps to spread the principle of darkness in the world.¹⁷² Mary’s virginity before, during, and after the birth remains, as held by Augustine, in service of Christological doctrine. Quodvultdeus points at the futility of Manichaean objections to the Incarnation, but he does not become distracted with other questions that might have been addressed as well, that is, the topic of the goodness of marriage or Manichaean sexual practices that Quodvultdeus encountered before in Carthage.¹⁷³ However, even this shows how determined Quodvultdeus was to present the doctrinal position of the Church and was more interested in the doctrine on God than on moral issues.

3.2 *Schismatics*

Another type of ‘leprosy’ was, for Quodvultdeus, represented by schismatic groups, especially by the Donatists, Maximianists, Luciferians, and others,¹⁷⁴ which Quodvultdeus distinguishes from the heretics, accusing them, nonetheless, of the same dividing of the Church as he accused the heretics.¹⁷⁵ The sin of dividing the body of Christ, common to the schismatics, was a topic very much alive in Africa of the fourth and fifth centuries, especially in the struggle between the Catholics or Caecilianists and Donatists or other more radical branches, such as Maximianists.¹⁷⁶ Both of these groups are treated

169 CN 6. 6 (CCL 60: 387).

170 CN 6. 2–5 (CCL 60: 387) *pessime haeretice manichaeae*.

171 AQH 6. 9 (CCL 60: 282).

172 Aug. *haer.* 46. 13 (CCL 46: 317); AQH 1. 9; 5. 11–14 (CCL 60: 262, 278 f.).

173 Aug. *haer.* 46. 8–10 (CCL 46: 314 f.) shows that both Augustine and Quodvultdeus heard, in their inquisitions of the Manichees in the 420s, of a practice of collecting semen so that it could be consumed by the Elect of the sect: see Shaw, *Sacred Violence*, 328.

174 L 2. 6. 10 (CCL 60: 81).

175 L 2. 18. 33; 2. 38. 41 (CCL 60: 103, 183).

176 On the Maximianists, see, for example, Francesco Scorza Barcellona, ‘Massimiano dona-

only in passing when Quodvultdeus affirms that both ‘the viper doctrine of the Donatists’ and ‘the snaky fraud’ of the Maximianists are crushed in pieces.¹⁷⁷ The bishop considers these groups as belonging to the past and does not give them much attention in his discourses; nonetheless, there might still have been groups of these dissidents in Carthage and that is why he issues such a warning.¹⁷⁸ However, although there was not much proximity of the Donatist groups with the Vandal Arians in dogmatic issues, the Donatists might have enjoyed more freedom than before.¹⁷⁹ Because of the Vandal invaders, the schismatic groups seem to be seen not as a great threat, although their presence is attested even later under the Vandal rule.¹⁸⁰

3.3 Pelagians

There is more than only one heresy that is branded the worst by Quodvultdeus; the Pelagians are one of them.¹⁸¹ He describes Pelagianism as ‘the blemish of leprosy on all body parts’, especially on the head and on the body.¹⁸² Leprosy on the head links the Pelagians to Manichaeism, as they would assert that God created man as mortal already before sin, which would make God the creator of evil and that would be contrary to the Christian teaching on the goodness of God and his creation.¹⁸³ Moreover, the Pelagians claimed that ‘the grace of Christ is not necessary for man and that Christ died, therefore, in vain’, and that they distinguish between adult and child baptism, ‘despite the fact that only one baptism was sanctified for the remission of all sins’.¹⁸⁴ For separating themselves with these doctrines from the body of Christ, they are considered

tista’, in NDPAC 3 (2008), 3109; Clemens Weidmann, ‘Maximianistae, Maximianus’, in AL 3 (2004–2010), 1210.

177 C 5. 7 (CCL 60: 415).

178 There is nearly no news about the Donatists from the 430s: Whelan, *Being Christian*, 37.

179 Pottier, 125.

180 Stanisław Adamiak, ‘Donatiści pod rządami Wandalów i Bizancjum’, *U schyłku starożytności—Studia źródłoznawcze* 8 (2009), 13–31; Isola, ‘Note sulle eresie’, 83–85. A renewed vigour of the Donatists is witnessed again in the times of Gregory the Great: see Frend, *Donatist Church*, 300–314; Robert A. Markus, ‘Donatism, the Last Phase’, in *Studies in Church History. Papers Read at the First Winter and Summer Meetings of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. C.W. Dugmore and C. Duggan (London: Nelson, 1964), i. 118–127; González Salinero, *Poder*, 73.

181 L 2. 6. 11 (CCL 60: 81f.).

182 L 2. 6. 11 (CCL 60: 81).

183 Genesis 1:10.12.18.21.25.31.

184 L 2. 6. 11 (CCL 60: 81): ... *quod gratia Dei necessaria hominis non sit, quod Christus gratis mortuus sit, quod unum baptisma in minoribus maioribusque diuissum sit, cum unum consecratum sit in remissionem omnium peccatorum*. See also TB1 3. 3 (CCL 60: 426).

by Quodvultdeus similar to the 'leprosy on the body' of the Donatists and other schismatic groups. It seems that Quodvultdeus still saw Pelagians as a danger for his Church.¹⁸⁵ The Pelagians and other heretic are for him 'outside' the Church: a view that Quodvultdeus shared with Augustine.¹⁸⁶

Quodvultdeus's attention is drawn to the Pelagians in his discourse *De cantico novo* where he speaks of them as those who strayed from Christ the Way (*aberrantes*).¹⁸⁷ This 'perverse' teaching embodies, for him, those described by Jeremiah 17:5 (*Accursed be anyone who trusts in human beings*), who rely on human abilities more than on God's grace.¹⁸⁸ Quodvultdeus likens such an attitude to the serpent's promise in Genesis 3:4–5, addressed to the first couple: *you will be similar to gods*, linking such an attitude to the mystery of iniquity present in humankind.¹⁸⁹ Adam embodies the outcome of free choice without the help of God's grace, which is capable only of a bad outcome, due to human pride.¹⁹⁰ The way to remedy such an attitude is the same medicine offered in baptism; it is the humility of Christ that restored human nature and the humility of the *competens* who decides to boast only in this humble Christ. This placing one's faith in the humble Christ alone, as a sign of baptismal conversion as Quodvultdeus envisions it, is what stands in contrast with the viewpoint of the Pelagians, and that is also the reason why the bishop rebuts them with such vehemence.¹⁹¹ Quodvultdeus's position towards the Pelagians is influenced by the exacerbated polemics of the last years of Augustine's life with Caelestius and Julian of Aeclanum, as Quodvultdeus shares, at least in major traits, Augustine's doctrine on grace that became predominant in African authors of the Vandal period.¹⁹²

185 It is difficult to see how strong the presence of the Pelagians was in the 430s in Carthage. In c 5. 9 (CCL 60: 415), he declares that this 'new dogma, encouraged by the devil's servants as by the magicians of the Pharaoh' has been already crushed to pieces and destroyed, although he might just allude to the condemnation of Pelagianism by the Council of Carthage, Pope Zosimus, and Emperor Honorius in 418. This affirmation maybe does not reflect the reality as it does not in the case of other heresies as well: in UQF 6. 2 (CCL 60: 403), he laments the jungle of the worst heresies, among them the 'depravity of the Pelagians'. The peril of this heresy might have been felt much more urgent in Italy a decade later when Leo the Great was trying to stop Julian who still promoted this view: L D. 6. 12 (CCL 60: 198).

186 Aug. *ciu.* 18. 51; 21. 25 (CCL 48: 648–650, 794–796).

187 See p. 146 above.

188 CN 8. 2 (CCL 60: 391).

189 CN 8. 3 (CCL 60: 391).

190 CN 8. 4–7 (CCL 60: 391).

191 CN 8. 8 (CCL 60: 391).

192 Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 78.

3.4 Sabellians

In his *De accedentibus ad gratiam* 1, Quodvultdeus warns his *competentes* against false interpretations of the first article of the creed sustained by heresies that, according to him, pretend to be truly Christian, affirming to worship God the Father almighty.¹⁹³ There he devotes several lines to the Sabellians (also called Patripassians),¹⁹⁴ followers of modalistic monarchianism that has its roots through the third-century Roman priest Sabellius and even from Noetus of Smyrna in the second century. This doctrine claimed that the Father and the Son are the same and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are only different modes in which God chooses to act.¹⁹⁵ Despite the ancientness of the heresy, the candidates might still have encountered someone or a community present in the region that sustained such a solution of the problem of the uniqueness of God and the existence of divine Persons, as numerous mentions of Sabellians in AQH might also suggest.¹⁹⁶ Even more plausibly, modalism as a theological view on the divine Persons could be one of the views the newcomers to the Christian faith might have taken, if they did not fully grasp the concept of the triune God.

To counter the Sabellian position, Quodvultdeus presents the biblical *testimonium* used by the Sabellians, that is, Jesus' answer to Philip's plea to show them the Father in John 14:9: *Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me?*, interpreting this that the Father and the Son were identical.¹⁹⁷ What he offers is the Catholic interpretation of the testimony, based upon the following verse of John 14:9–10: *Anyone who has seen me has also seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?*¹⁹⁸ His argumentation focuses on the 'also' (*et*) which demonstrates the distinctiveness of the Father and the Son.¹⁹⁹ Although the Father and the Son are not identical (*unus*): the unity of the Godhead is still preserved and maintained, as they are

193 AI 10. 1–13 (CCL 60: 449f.).

194 AQH 1. 10 (CCL 60: 262).

195 AI 10. 7–10 (CCL 60: 449); Manlio Simonetti, *Studi di cristologia postrnicena* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2006), 7f.

196 AQH 3. 11; 4. 12–13, 18, 24, 40; 6. 9, 37, 67, 71; 7. 1, 4, 13, 33, 36–37, 47–49 (CCL 60: 266, 270–272, 276, 282, 286, 291–293, 295, 298–300). Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 73 n. 32 also points to the *anathemata* of the Council of Braga (561, can. 1) and Lateran (649; can. 18) that witness to the existence of the old heresy in later times.

197 AI 10. 9 (CCL 60: 449).

198 AI 11. 3, 5 (CCL 60: 450): *Tanto tempore uobiscum sum, et non cognouistis me? Philippe, qui me uidit, uidit et Patrem meum ... Annon, cognoscis, quia ego in Patre et Pater in me est?*

199 AI 11. 4 (CCL 60: 450).

described as 'one' (*unum*) in John 10:30.²⁰⁰ However, in his pre-baptismal catechesis, Quodvultdeus does not intend to portray the Sabellians, but he is rather interested in making clear to his audience that to worship the only God (*fides qua*) it does not suffice to have any kind of belief (*fides quae*) but only the true understanding of God, allowing us to know God and to love him.²⁰¹

3.5 Arians

The prominent place among the religious adversaries of the Catholics in Carthage is that of the Vandal Arians. Quodvultdeus's pre-baptismal sermons witness extensively to his hostile attitude towards the Arian form of Christianity, which denied the divinity of the Son. As was the case of other heresies also, Quodvultdeus does not spare the Arians his serious challenges. He blames them in that they do not take Christ as the fundament of their reasoning and in doing so they separate believers from the truth.²⁰² He calls them 'foolish' and 'stupid'²⁰³ and blames their doctrine for going into 'great ruin'.²⁰⁴ As they insult the Lord and the Church, the Arian is a 'wolf' and 'snake' whose teaching is just a fraud.²⁰⁵ Yet, they are guilty of pride, with which they present their teaching²⁰⁶ as they insult the doctrine of the Church with their affronts.²⁰⁷ They use only human, and not divine, reasoning, look at things 'carnally' and without a pure and single heart,²⁰⁸ and, thus, they oppose the 'evangelic and apostolical teaching', based upon the fundament of the apostles, with their 'perversity' that has been already convinced of its error.²⁰⁹

During the fourth and fifth centuries, the Arian doctrine was not at the centre of concern of the Church in Africa: it was the Donatist schism that dominated the debate.²¹⁰ However, already before the arrival of the Vandals on African soil in 429, the disputes with Arians had become more and more present in the works of Augustine.²¹¹ The new rulers of Africa, however, started

200 A1 11. 5 (CCL 60: 450): *ego enim et Pater non unus, sed unum sumus*. See also AQH 7. 49 (CCL 60: 300).

201 A1 11. 6–7 (CCL 60: 450).

202 CIPA 19. 7 (CCL 60: 255).

203 A1 13. 1 (CCL 60: 451): *insipiens; stulti*.

204 S1 9. 18 (CCL 60: 328): *ruina magna*.

205 S1 13. 4 (CCL 60: 334): *lupus; serpens*.

206 S3 9. 9; UQF 6. 2 (CCL 60: 361, 403).

207 S3 13. 5 (CCL 60: 363).

208 CN 7. 3; CIPA 5. 4; 7. 1; UQF 6. 21 (CCL 60: 388, 233, 235, 404).

209 CN 7. 33; UQF 6. 25; A2 13. 5 (CCL 60: 390, 405, 470).

210 Whelan, 'Arian Controversy', 504–521; Id., 'Surrogate Fathers', 19–37.

211 For Augustine on Arianism, see, for example, Manlio Simonetti, 'S. Agostino e gli Ariani', REA 13 (1967), 55–84; Simonetti, *Studi*, 291–324. For Augustine's reception under the

to promote their Arian faith and persecute the opposing Catholic clergy with a decisiveness that surprised the Roman population. There is no wonder that the Catholic clergy, well instructed and prepared for the doctrinal debate,²¹² resisted not only the Arians' usurpation of their properties and churches, but especially the violation of the creed, and even reacted in a provocative way to the maltreatment.²¹³ As religion and politics were inseparable in Roman antiquity, it is nearly impossible to assess whether the harsh reaction of Quodvultdeus and other Catholic clergy to the Vandal invaders was propelled more by concern for their *Romanitas* or their true faith.²¹⁴ The contraposition between the Roman and the barbarian, as well as between the Catholic Christian and the barbarian, was even more intensified by the techniques of ancient rhetorics that played with colourful contrasts, aiming at moving or pushing the audience toward the desired stance.²¹⁵ Quodvultdeus, like some earlier authors such as Ambrose, perceived the invading barbarians as a fulfilment of the apocalyptic prophecies of Ezekiel and the Book of Revelation, speaking about Gog and Magog. Since the unfortunate outcome of the battle of Adrianople in 378, the barbarians were a real threat, causing entire populations to flee, taking many Romans captive, and damaging the economy and well-being of entire regions. However, the barbarians brought not only disaster in the economic and demographic sense: Christian writers adherent to the Nicene doctrine on the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father saw their Arian religious view as equally disastrous for the faith and spiritual well-being of the Christian believers entrusted to them.²¹⁶ Nonetheless, Quodvultdeus perceived, as probably other Catholic Romans did, the Arians as a threat both religious and existential.

In the first place, the catecheses warn the audience that despite the Arians' claim that they are the true form of Christianity, there are serious defects in their doctrine which do not permit them to do so.²¹⁷ If there was not much difference between Catholic and Arian churches of the era, as a comparison of the Arian and Catholic baptistry in Ravenna might suggest, the Christian

Vandals, see Uta Heil, 'Augustin-Rezeption im Reich der Vandalen. Die *Altercatio sancti Augustini cum Pascentio Arriano*', ZAC 11/1 (2007), 6–29.

212 Simonetti, *Produzione letteraria*, 22f.; González Salinero, *Poder*, 112f.

213 Zocca, 600.

214 González Salinero, *Poder*, 111.

215 Paolo Siniscalco, 'Il termine *Romanus* e suoi significati in scrittori cristiani del v secolo', in *Hestiasis*, ed. S. Calderone (Messina: Sicaria, 1986), 203f.

216 L D. 13. 22 (CCL 60: 207); Massimiliano Pavan, 'Sant'Ambrogio e il problema dei barbari', *RomBarb* 3 (1978), 167–187; Visonà, 133–168; Marco Sannazzaro, '«Gog iste Gothus est». Presenze barbariche a Milano e in Lombardia tra fine IV e inizi V secolo alla luce delle testimonianze archeologiche ed epigrafiche', *StAmbr* 5 (2011), 95–120; Hoover, 8.

217 AI 12. 1 (CCL 60: 450).

believer needed to be well-rooted in his faith and in the Church's teaching to recognise what form of worship he attends.²¹⁸ That might be another reason why Quodvultdeus cared so much to explain the creed and give his *competentes* a sound knowledge of the doctrine that helped them persevere in their faith. After all, a common believer could easily say to himself: their worship looks quite the same as ours, there might be a difference of just a few words, how could my salvation hang on these minute differences?²¹⁹ Quodvultdeus's dutiful catechesis, directed also against heretical groups, aimed to show his believers that the content of their faith they profess in the baptismal creed is decisive.

There is no other passage in Quodvultdeus's works that would express Quodvultdeus's attitude towards the Arians better than an exacerbated piece of s1 where he criticises the division of the body of the Church:

Heretic, you do far worse than the Jew did. For behold, although the Jew [scil. Judas] was paid a reward for the purpose of killing Christ, and then only once pierced his side as he hung on the cross, still, he preserved his whole body intact. But you, indeed, pay money every day with the result that you cut off different bodily members of the One who sits in heaven. But may you, beloved, who have been nourished from the breasts of Holy Mother the Church in the beginning and have been weaned by her to solid food, remain dwelling in her.²²⁰

Indeed, many Catholic Christians must already have been since the first years of the Vandal invasion drawn by the vision of what the new lords of Africa would promise to them. Some social changes could have been perceived as positive, as it was not easy to live in those years under the Roman administration. The burden laid primarily on the poor, as well as that of the civic duties on the magistrates, was becoming more and more unbearable. The change of the rule

²¹⁸ Bockmann, 217.

²¹⁹ Also, the author of the Arian commentary on Job warns his readers not to visit the liturgy of the other, that is, the Catholic Church. It is even possible that the practice of both Arians and Catholics of visiting the worship that was available to them was quite common: see Dossey, 109 f.

²²⁰ S113. 9–11 (CCL 60: 334): *Peiora, haeretice, facis quam quae fecit Iudaeus. Ecce enim Iudaeus etsi praemio comparauit Christum occidendum, semel latus in cruce pendentis pupugit, sed totum eius corpus integrum reseruauit: tu uero ad hoc eum quotidie comparas pecunia, ut sedentis in caelo diuersa laceres membra. Vos autem, dilectissimi, qui ab initio uberibus sanctae matris Ecclesiae nutriti, usque ad solidum cibum estis ab ea perducti, manete in ea.*

could have been, therefore, seen positively and they could have concluded that their future, and that of their families, could be joined with the career of the conquerors.²²¹ It is also likely that the differences between the Catholic and Arian doctrine would be just nuances for someone who was not interested or particularly intelligent.

Quodvultdeus tried to show that the Arians' doctrine shattered the core of the Christian message and the spiritual life of the believers. This is why he considered Arianism as a far greater danger than Paganism or Judaism, even though the fact that Arians remained much nearer to the Catholic faith than other religious groups.²²² The invectives thrown against the Arians, then, are not dissimilar to those against other heresies or the Jews. That would speak for the prevalent religious motivation of Quodvultdeus's polemics against the Arian Vandals. Besides the description of the tendency to 'lure' Catholic Romans into their ranks using bribes etc., the bishop's discourse focuses on the rhetorical depiction of the unreasonableness, lack of education, and knowledge especially of the biblical text, as the Arians endeavour to reason about the realities that exceed the capacities of the human mind.²²³

To this kind of human 'reasoning', Quodvultdeus repeatedly juxtaposes the 'divine teaching' found in the Scriptures. It was nothing new that the supporters of the Nicene Creed accused the Arians of introducing mere human rationality to the discourse of the nature of Christ and the intra-trinitarian relationships.²²⁴ This pattern where Quodvultdeus contrasts Arian human reasoning with divine teaching found in the Scriptures repeats and the bishop opts for the ineffable and not understandable that cannot be explained with human words.²²⁵ Trying to avoid so-called 'human argumentation', Quodvultdeus relies on the 'divine authority of the Scriptures'.²²⁶ To convince his listeners, Quodvultdeus employs, similarly to Augustine, an already traditional set of biblical testimonies with their interpretation in favour of the Nicene doctrine on the Trinity.²²⁷ The most important of these was his explanation of John 14:28: *The Father is greater than me*²²⁸ where he contrasts this verse, used by the Ari-

221 Peter Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: HUP, 2015), 344.

222 He recalls the crimes of the Arian Vandals against the Catholic churches also later in L 2. 34. 76; D. 13. 22 (CCL 60: 142, 207).

223 CIPA 7. 1–4; A1 15. 7 (CCL 60: 235f., 454).

224 Ambr. *fid.* 1. 13. 79 (SAEMO 15: 96); Consentius ad Aug. *ep.* 119. 1 (CSEL 34/2: 699).

225 S2 9. 12 (CCL 60: 346).

226 CN 7. 3 (CCL 60: 388): *argumentatio humana, non auctoritas diuina*.

227 John 1:1–2; 8:56; 14:9–11; see CIPA 5. 5–8; A1 12. 3–12 (CCL 60: 233, 450f.).

228 CIPA 8. 1; CN 7. 10 (CCL 60: 228f., 388).

ans as a useful battering ram, with quotes that affirm the Son's existence from the beginning (John 1:1) and his omnipotence because of the creation of all through Christ (John 1:3).²²⁹ There was no time when the Father was without the Word.²³⁰ The Son is without end and without any diminishing; as the Father is eternal, so he is, and his origin is already before time or where there is no time. Also these arguments serve to emphasise the Son's divine omnipotence, acting in baptism and the other sacraments of the Church.²³¹ In fact, it is his eternity and having his origin outside time that requires the 'eyes of the heart' to see him.²³² Similarly to the Jews, the Arians are not able to see spiritually, accept Christ's divine Sonship, and interpret the verses that point to Christ as the 'beginning' who existed from eternity.²³³

The fictive dialogues with the 'hermeneutical' Arian present in the pre-baptismal catecheses can be understood best not as an appeal to the present Vandals, but rather as a rhetorical device that should have to embellish the discourse and help to hold the attention of the audience. Similarly powerful are the prayers to Christ, 'our Moses', the 'rod-serpent', to call upon his help in the struggle against the 'dragon's head' of the Arian heresy, intertwined with the apostrophe addressed to the Arian heretic.²³⁴ What is more, to this dialogue with God and virtual Arians, Quodvultdeus calls as a witness the apostles Paul, Peter, and John to testify with their sentences to his argumentation against the Arian doctrine.²³⁵ In this way, even the doubts in the minds of the present *competentes* could be addressed; as Quodvultdeus calls upon the Arian, he also addresses them and, trying to convince the Arian, it is his audience he strives to convince.²³⁶ Through the delimiting of the faith of his audience, the bishop involves them in prayer to Christ, and in the dialogue with the Scriptures represented by the apostles and prophets; again, he sets them, using the mystical method, in the midst of the history of salvation, which is their own.

229 CN 7. 11, 13 (CCL 60: 389).

230 CIPA 5. 5; CN 7. 13 (CCL 60: 233, 389).

231 S1 3. 15, 21–22; 4. 2; S3 9. 2; CN 7. 13 (CCL 60: 311f., 360, 389).

232 S2 3. 5; C 5. 31 (CCL 60: 338, 417).

233 CN 7. 14 (CCL 60: 389). Rudolf Lorenz, *Arius judaizans?: Untersuchung zur dogmengeschichtlichen Einordnung des Arius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 177 has pointed out some similarities in the theological approach to the only God and the mediator in the process of creation both in the Arius's teaching and some currents of the Judaism of the first centuries. This confirms affinities in the polemics with Arianism and Judaism of other Christian writers of the era: see Ambr. *fid.* 3. 10. 65 (SAEMO 15: 224); Gaud. *tr.* 19. 20 (CSEL 68: 169); Aug. *Io. eu. tr.* 17. 6; 48. 8 (CCL 36: 173f., 417).

234 C 5. 11–14 (CCL 60: 415).

235 C 5. 17–20, 25–26 (CCL 60: 415f.).

236 C 5. 21–23 (CCL 60: 416).

It is interesting to see that, in his argumentation against the Arian attempts to lure some of his flock, Quodvultdeus employs a similar rhetoric to that used by Augustine against the Donatists.²³⁷ As I have noted more than once, to change one's ecclesiastical allegiance meant, for Quodvultdeus too, to apostatise from the faith and to risk one's salvation. The Arian heresy is presented as someone who mutilates the body of the only Christ the believers are part of, as someone who abducts the Church's children as soon as they are reborn from the baptismal font into the new life. The believers take part, according to him, in the history of salvation, where the mystery of Christ is being revealed, and if someone refuses to accept this revelation in its entirety, as taught by the Catholic Church, the Mother of the believers, and the Bride of Christ, he separates himself just as 'devil's wolves' from the flock of Christ and this history of salvation.²³⁸

Quodvultdeus rejects, therefore, the Arian doctrine on God and Christ. He portrays the endeavour of the Arians to preserve the unicity of God and his omnipotence by claiming full divinity and omnipotence only for the Father. Similarly to the formula of Rimini (359), they claimed that the Father is greater (*maior*) than the Son who is lesser (*minor*) than the Father;²³⁹ the Holy Spirit, then, is even much lesser than the Son (*inferior; multo inferior*).²⁴⁰ In this way, they denied the equality of the Son with the Father in his divinity.²⁴¹ In doing so, they taught gradual subordination and inequality of the hypostases.²⁴² They explained the difference between the hypostases by the distinctness in form in which the hypostases could be seen: where the Father is invisible, the Son appeared in the form of a man, and the Spirit in the form of a dove.²⁴³ Quodvultdeus obviously corrects this Arian understanding—which he calls 'empty scaffolds'—of the 'essence' of the hypostases²⁴⁴ and of the incarnation of the Spirit in the form of a dove²⁴⁵ simply pointing to Gospel sayings referring to Christ as the Lamb, without suggesting that the Word took the visible form of a lamb.²⁴⁶

237 Aug., *en. Ps.* 85: 19 (CCL 39: 1191f.).

238 UQF 6. 18 (CCL 60: 405); Simone, 281f.

239 CIPA 7. 7; 8. 1–3; S1 3. 10; 4. 16; 9. 6, 25–26; S3 9. 2; CN 7. 9–11, 17; UQF 6. 20; A1 12. 1–2, 5, 8; 14. 5 (CCL 60: 236f., 311, 314, 326, 329, 360, 388f., 404, 450f., 453).

240 S1 9. 6; UQF 6. 20; A1 12. 1–2 (CCL 60: 326, 404, 450).

241 CN 7. 1 (CCL 60: 388).

242 S3 9. 8; CN 7. 17 (CCL 60: 361, 389).

243 S1 9. 7 (CCL 60: 326f.).

244 S1 9. 18 (CCL 60: 328): *uanas machinas*.

245 He follows Augustine's exposition in *trin.* 2. 5. 7; 5. 2. 3 (CCL 50: 87–89, 207f.); Finn, *From Death to Rebirth*, 56.

246 S1 9. 15 (CCL 60: 327).

It would be worthwhile to follow Quodvultdeus's set of testimonies he uses for his confrontation with Arian teaching; nonetheless, I consider more important the fact that the subordinationist doctrine and the inequality of the persons, as well as unity of the Trinity, has, according to Quodvultdeus, an immediate influence upon the efficacy of the baptism and other sacraments on the lives of the *competentes*: if the Arians were right, the Son would not be omnipotent and would not be empowered to forgive their sins.²⁴⁷ Separating the persons of the Trinity, they insult all of them and God does not dwell in them.²⁴⁸ The same is true also for the Holy Spirit: as the forgiveness of all sins is a gift of the Holy Spirit, claiming that he is 'much inferior' to the Son undermines his ability to act in baptism and the efficacy of the baptism the *competentes* are to receive as such, which is, for the bishop, a sacrilege.²⁴⁹ For Quodvultdeus's believers, to preserve the unity and equality of the divine persons also meant to keep one's innocence and ability to see God.²⁵⁰

Similarly, against the concept of two gods, Quodvultdeus uses John 8:56 and the notion of the unity (*unum*), not the identity of the hypostases.²⁵¹ The unity of the Godhead is one of the major topics Quodvultdeus presents in his catecheses where he desires to show that the persons of the Trinity do not act separately, but their action is united. To explain this, Quodvultdeus uses the question of whether it is the Father or the Son who will judge the living and the dead at the Last Judgement;²⁵² in fact, it is the whole Trinity that is the Judge.²⁵³ This explanation has, obviously, also eschatological consequences that involve the salvation of Quodvultdeus's listeners.

It is because this unity and equality of the divine persons was challenged by the Arian teaching and, as it was not easy for Quodvultdeus's assembly to understand the Church's teaching, he took special time to foster the adherence of his *competentes* and baptised believers to this doctrine. For him, it is only this doctrine that allows the soul to acquire wisdom and to allow the inhabitation of the whole Trinity in the human soul.²⁵⁴ In fact, the unity of the divine persons is connected to the spousal union between the Christ-Bridegroom and the Church-Bride; where the Arians denied both, Quodvultdeus tries to bring

247 S1 10. 1 (CCL 60: 329).

248 S1 4. 31–32 (CCL 60: 316).

249 CIPA 19. 5–6 (CCL 60: 254 f.).

250 S2 9. 17 (CCL 60: 328).

251 CIPA 5. 6–7 (CCL 60: 233).

252 S1 4. 11–12 (CCL 60: 313 f.).

253 S1 4. 23 (CCL 60: 315).

254 S1 4. 32 (CCL 60: 316).

his listeners to understand and accept not only the doctrine on the inseparability of the Trinity but also on its indwelling in the believer's soul.²⁵⁵ His ultimate goal is not only to teach the Church's doctrine, but this teaching has an immediate impact on the spiritual life of his audience: the theology and spirituality are for him, in fact, one.

However, Quodvultdeus responds not only to the religious questioning of his audience but tried to answer also the existential menace. The above-quoted passage (S1 13. 9–11) describes also the fact that, to move the Catholic Romans to change their religious allegiance, the Vandals relied not only upon force, threatening them with exile, prison, torture, or even death,²⁵⁶ but were luring them also with various kinds of bribes: with money, with power, or just with flattery.²⁵⁷ That would not be exceptional, for example, for a widow or other beneficiaries of Church assistance to be tempted to benefit from the services of the clergy of a rival party, in this case of the Arians.²⁵⁸ Ensnaring the Catholics with deceit, the heretics reveal not only the falsity of their conscience, but also their inability and unwillingness to search for the truth with their minds.²⁵⁹ However, Quodvultdeus does not accent the political dimension of such a practice, but he sees the forced apostasy from the faith and from life in the Church rather as a spiritual murder committed on the person.²⁶⁰ The money spent on coaxing a person to join the Arians through rebaptism is that used to sell Christ.²⁶¹

This practice of rebaptism is the one he criticises the most. Contrary to the baptism he describes in his sermons, this second baptism would not bring the persons new life and forgiveness of sins, but the multiplication of them instead.²⁶² If already baptised Christians are forced to be baptised again, Quodvultdeus considers it a crime against the unity of Christ's body.²⁶³ It is the same charge as the Catholic authors used in the previous generations against the Donatists, as they also repeated the baptism of Catholics who wanted to join them,²⁶⁴ however, the practice of rebaptism can be traced to many com-

255 UQF 6. 4, 18–21 (CCL 60: 403 f.).

256 Vict. Vit. 1. 43 (ed. Lancel 116 f.).

257 S1 13. 6; CIPA 7. 5; 19. 7; AQH 7. 37 (CCL 60: 334, 236, 255, 299); Isola, *Cristiani*, 81.

258 Perrin, 220 f.

259 CIPA 10. 7 (CCL 60: 240).

260 A2 12. 6; TB1 8. 8 (CCL 60: 469, 436). Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 193.

261 S1 13. 6 (CCL 60: 334).

262 S1 13. 6; UQF 6. 24; A2 12. 6; TB1 8. 8; L 1. 25. 34; 2. 19. 35; 2. 31. 69 (CCL 60: 334, 405, 469, 436, 43, 105, 135).

263 CIPA 19. 4; L 2. 27. 57 (CCL 60: 254, 125 f.). See also *ep.* apud Aug. 221. 2 (CCL 60: 490).

264 Whelan, 'Arian Controversy', 510 ff.; Pignot, 'Catechumenate', 210.

munities well into the third century.²⁶⁵ Quodvultdeus reproaches Arians for this practice²⁶⁶ and he even considers the rebaptism of the Catholics the main crime of the Arians, in fact as a reversal of the action performed during the rite of the scrutiny, as he accuses the Arians that they ‘exsufflate Christ’ from the already baptised Catholics.²⁶⁷ In doing so, the rebaptised Catholics lose their inheritance and Christ himself;²⁶⁸ the Arians do not build the temple of God with ‘living stones’ that they have baptised again, but rather with those they ‘suffocate, dishonour, reprobate, lay waste, condemn, and destroy’.²⁶⁹

It also seems that, for the practice of rebaptism, Quodvultdeus and other African sources considered the Vandals as the apocalyptic kings that would mark the imminent end of the world.²⁷⁰ Quodvultdeus used a traditional argument against rebaptism, based upon John 13:10: *He who has been washed once does not need to be washed again*, both in his AQH and in *Liber*.²⁷¹ And in his exposition on the creed he affirmed the doctrine on the one and only baptism that can, contrary to rebaptism, forgive sins.²⁷² Such an action goes not only against the Lord, but against also the maternity of the Church.²⁷³

3.6 *Jews*

Judaism was not a heresy in the strict sense, but many Christians looked upon the Jews in the same way that they did upon the heretics: in fact, they were afflicted with imperial legislation similar to the Christian heresies.²⁷⁴ As I have already mentioned, Jewish communities in North Africa likely had established themselves in early Roman times and it seems that in the first half of the fifth century, the Jewish presence and influence had not diminished.²⁷⁵ Also, long

265 J. Patout Burns, ‘On Rebaptism: Social Organisation in the Third-Century Church’, *J ECS* 1 (1993), 367–403; Ferguson, 451, 570, 761 and 575f.

266 TB2 14. 4, 11 (CCL 60: 486).

267 CIPA 19. 6; S1 13. 6; S3 13. 5 (CCL 60: 255, 334, 363): *exsufflatis; exsufflas*. The same position in L 1. 36. 50; 2. 27. 57; D. 8. 15 (CCL 60: 58, 126, 201) would speak again for the same authorship of the sermons and the *Liber promissionum*. The practice is confirmed by Vict. Vit. 1. 21, 33; 3. 45, 48 (ed. Lancel 106, 112, 198, 200).

268 L D. 14. 23 (CCL 60: 208).

269 UQF 6. 24 (CCL 60: 405): *quod rebaptizando praefocas, exhonoras, reprobas, uastas, damnas, exterminas*. See also L 2. 19. 35 (CCL 60: 105).

270 Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus*, 120.

271 AQH 7. 38; L D. 14. 23 (CCL 60: 299, 208); Aug. *en. Ps.* 39. 1 (CCL 38: 323f.).

272 CIPA 19. 4 (CCL 60: 254); see also TBI 8. 12 (CCL 60: 436).

273 S1 13. 6 (CCL 60: 334).

274 Amnon Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit, Mich.—Jerusalem: Wayne State University Press—Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1987).

275 The situation of the Jews in ancient Africa is studied by Yann Le Bohec, ‘Bilan des re-

passages in CIPA and AQH devoted to 'the insane impiety of the Jews'²⁷⁶ speak for the existence and activity of the Jewish community or communities in Carthage.²⁷⁷ However, unlike in other parts of the Empire, especially in the East and in Spain, where the Christians were very attracted by the synagogue, nothing like this can be attested in Augustine's or Quodvultdeus's Africa.²⁷⁸ Still, the Jewish community remained 'numerically large, geographically widespread, a force to be reckoned with in society'.²⁷⁹ In this way, together with the Donatists, Manichaeans, or other heretics, such as the Arians, they were drawn into an alliance against the favoured Catholics who were on the rise during the first third of the fifth century.²⁸⁰

The way Quodvultdeus speaks about them arouses much suspicion about his anti-Jewish sentiment. He does not hesitate to call them 'enemies',²⁸¹ not only of the Christians but of Christ himself.²⁸² He accuses them of their 'perverse' intents as they do not believe in the Messiah and 'craftily prepare a plot' against him.²⁸³ Similarly, he lays the blame at the 'wicked land of the Jews' to be 'at odds with heaven', when they do not accept the star pointing to the newborn King in Bethlehem and tried to 'do away with him who came to redeem' them.²⁸⁴ Not only does he reproach them as 'deceitful lips' whose speech differs from their conscience, but he accuses them also of a lack of desire to know the truth.²⁸⁵ Although they read the promises of their Law and the Prophets, they did not recognise Christ when he was with them, thus being unable to under-

cherches sur le judaïsme au Maghreb dans l'Antiquité, *Espacio Tiempo y Forma. Serie II. Historia Antigua* 6 (1993), 551–566.

276 S1 6. 7 (CCL 60: 320): *uesana impietas Iudaeorum*.

277 Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 86.

278 N.R.M. De Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (London—New York—Melbourne: CUP, 1976), 75–116; Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyrill of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1971), 9–54; Id., *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late Fourth Century* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1983), 66–94; Finn, *From Death to Rebirth*, 50.

279 Wilken, *Judaism*, 27; Finn, *From Death to Rebirth*, 51.

280 Aug. s. 62. 12 (PL 38: 423); González Salinero, 'The Anti-Judaism', 452; Nazzaro, 'Contro Giudei', 521.

281 CIPA 15. 8; 17. 1; S1 6. 9; A1 10. 6; A2 8. 7 (CCL 60: 247, 250, 321, 449, 465): *inimici*; similarly, also in L 2. 25. 54 (CCL 60: 122).

282 CIPA 18. 10 (CCL 60: 253); see also L 2. 35. 79 (CCL 60: 145).

283 S1 10. 5 (CCL 60: 330).

284 S1 5. 13 (CCL 60: 318; tr. Finn 35): *Iudaeorum terra impia, non congruis caelo*; see also CIPA 10. 3–11; 17. 2 ff.; S3 4. 12 (CCL 60: 239 f., 356).

285 CIPA 10. 7–8 (CCL 60: 240): *O labia dolosa*.

stand their true meaning.²⁸⁶ The 'blindness' and 'fury of the frenzied' had filled their hearts as they handed over Christ to be crucified, and demons possessed their hearts, and thus they are not anymore able to discern the truth about Christ properly.²⁸⁷ In this way, in their 'mad impiety' they not only refused the Christ invitation to come to the wedding, they killed him, the Bridegroom.²⁸⁸ Therefore, they have been turned into 'false witnesses'²⁸⁹ who are even blamed for their crime of crucifying Christ.²⁹⁰

Such language moved R. González Salinero to affirm that it provides the ideological fundaments of the aggressive politics that both the ecclesiastic and civic institutions in power instigated against the Jewish and that can be seen as 'the "official" anti-Jewish attitude of the Catholic Christianity of North Africa'. This aggressive attitude is explained by the Jewish influence that 'could also deprive the Church of some of its staunch supporters'.²⁹¹ B.D. Shaw opines that Quodvultdeus, in his 'anti-Jewish tirades ... is more concerned with reinforcing Christian identity and with fixing commitments within the Christian community against potential "Judaizing" tendencies'.²⁹² It is true that the Church proclaimed anti-Jewish canons in the decisions of the African councils and that she relied on the imperial legislation that tried to limit the Jewish influence, especially upon the Christian population.²⁹³

However, Quodvultdeus's choice of words against the Jews is not worse than against Christian heretics. Also, his argumentation against them is much similar to that against other groups. That shows that it was more the views or attitudes described as 'Jewish' that alerted Quodvultdeus.

The similarities with the altercation against Arianism point to the opinion that Quodvultdeus was not concerned as much with political struggle for power with the other groups but with religion and doctrine: the problem he faced was a Christological one.²⁹⁴ The most critical defect Quodvultdeus reproaches in the Jews is their lack of faith in the divinity of Christ.²⁹⁵ It was this denial of

286 CIPA 11. 2–4; S2 4. 5 (CCL 60: 241, 339).

287 CIPA 17. 8–10; S2 5. 4, 11; S3 5. 16 (CCL 60: 251 f., 341 f., 357).

288 S1 6. 7 (CCL 60: 320): *uesana impietas*.

289 CIPA 14. 10 (CCL 60: 246): *falsis testibus*.

290 CN 6. 3; S2 5. 4; A1 10. 6; A2 8. 7 (CCL 60: 297, 341, 449, 465).

291 González Salinero, 'The Anti-Judaism', 447 f.

292 Shaw, *Sacred Violence*, 268.

293 Council of Carthage (419), can. 197; Council of Hippo (427), can. 6; Bernhard Blumenkranz, 'Die christlich-jüdische Missionskonkurrenz', *Klio. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte* 39 (1961), 229; *CTh* 16. 5. 44, 46; 16. 8. 19 (408–409).

294 Finn, *From Death to Rebirth*, 50.

295 CIPA 10. 4; 11. 1; S1 8. 1 (CCL 60: 239, 241, 325).

the divinity of Christ²⁹⁶ that made the 'Jews' similar to the Arians who denied him the same power as the Father has. That seems a plausible reason for the fact that Quodvultdeus devotes to the refusal of this Jewish attitude vis-à-vis Christ much space in his pre-baptismal discourses. Without Christ's divine power, the sacrament of baptism would not be efficient, it would not bring the desired forgiveness of sins, and it would not make the neophytes children of the Father who come into their inheritance. If they took the Jewish stance, at the Last Judgment the Judge who would come to judge the living and the dead would be found dead, that is, spiritually dead, as they are.²⁹⁷ This is why Quodvultdeus exhorts his *competentes* to believe more in Christ the Truth than the 'Jew' who crucified him.²⁹⁸

The Jew that Quodvultdeus battles is primarily a 'hermeneutical Jew', a fictive proponent of the denial of Christ's divine Sonship. This 'Jew' that Quodvultdeus uses in his discourses helps him show what is indeed precious and crucial in the faith the *competentes* are to receive, guiding them to a spiritual logic that should penetrate their lives: 'What Jew and Gentile detest is where the Christian finds salvation.'²⁹⁹ What the bishop teaches is a logic that surpasses the reasoning of this world and helps them find their way also in the practicalities of their Christian lives.

Also, that is why he labels as 'Jews' those who were not able to read the Scripture typologically and to understand the Christological reality in the Old Testament figures. Such an inability to see the mystery of Christ that hinders the audience to come to the faith is portrayed in the disciples on the way to Emmaus whose eyes were kept closed and unable to recognise the divinity of Christ.³⁰⁰ Similarly, it is the synagogue in the figure of Michal who—unable to understand the figure of her king, leaping naked before the Ark together with servants and maids—did not see the glory of Christ and rejected David as acting in a way unworthy of a king.³⁰¹ Israel according to the flesh is, for Quodvultdeus, an embodiment of such an attitude that is unable to see with the eyes of the faith, and, subsequently, also to accept Christ as God's Son.

296 CIPA 11. 1 (CCL 60: 241).

297 CIPA 18. 14; S3 8. 4 (CCL 60: 254, 360).

298 CN 6. 3; A1 19. 1; A2 6. 9 (CCL 60: 387, 449, 463). For the theological debates between Christianity and Judaism, Denise Judant, *Judaïsme et christianisme: dossier patristique* (Paris: Ed. du Cèdre, 1969) remains a classic.

299 S2 5. 3 (CCL 60: 341; tr. Finn 58): *Quod Iudaeus et Gentilis detestatur, Christianus inde saluatur*.

300 A2 4. 3; 9. 4 (CCL 60: 461, 465); see also AQH 4. 36 (CCL 60: 274f.).

301 A2 9. 7–8 (CCL 60: 466).

What is even more, the argumentation with Judaism is linked to Quodvultdeus's exposition of the spousal mystery of Christ and the Church, where the problem of the Jews is that they do not know it.³⁰² They killed the Bridegroom, they bought Christ from Judas who sold him; however, the Jews could not keep him for themselves.³⁰³

Exult, Christian; you have gained in the transaction of your enemies; what Judas sold and the Jews bought, you acquired. Rejoice, rejoice, bridal church, for had not these things happened to Christ, you would not have been formed from him. Sold, he redeemed you; killed, he loved you: and since he loved you so much, he chose to die for you. Oh the great mystery of this marriage! How great the mystery of this Bridegroom and bride! Human words are not up to explaining it. From the Bridegroom, the bride is born. As she is being born, she is immediately united to him. At the very moment her spouse dies, the bride marries him. At the moment he is joined to his bride, he is severed from mortals. At the moment he is raised above the heavens, she is made fruitful throughout the whole earth.³⁰⁴

The passage demonstrates very tellingly that Quodvultdeus uses the strident anti-Jewish affront to underline the beauty, charm, and excellence of the Church's relationship to the Son of God, described with the mystical language of the matrimonial union of the two. As part of the Church, the believers take part also in this spousal union, in fact, they are united so intensely to Christ. On the one hand, Quodvultdeus delimits the space of this spousal union, affirming that it is not possible for his listeners to have a part in it if they are not part of the Church and do not hold her teaching, especially that on Christ's divinity. On the other hand, he makes clear what the difference is between what is disposable for them in following Jewish practices and the Catholic faith they receive in the creed: "To him [scil. Christ] the hostile Jews gave bitter vinegar to drink,

302 S1 6. 2 (CCL 60: 320).

303 S1 6. 7–8; 13. 9; S3 4. 12; CIPA 18. 3; UQF 3. 2, 7, 17 (CCL 60: 320 f., 334, 355, 252, 397–399).

304 S1 6. 9–11 (CCL 60: 321; tr. Finn 37 f.): *Exsulta, Christiane; in commercium inimicorum tuorum tu uicisti: quod Iudas uendidit et Iudaeus emit, tu acquisisti. Exsulta, exsulta, sponsa Ecclesia; quia nisi ista in Christo facta essent, tu ab illo formata non esses. Venditus redemit te, occisus dilexit te: et quia te plurimum dilexit, mori uoluit propter te. O magnum sacramentum huius coniugii! o quam magnum mysterium huius sponsi et huius sponsae! non explicabitur digne humanis uerbis. De sponso sponsa nascitur, et ut nascitur, statim illi coniungitur; et tunc sponsa nubet, quando sponsus moritur; et tunc ille sponsae coniungitur, quando a mortalibus separatur: quando ille super caelos exaltatur, tunc ista in omni terra fecundatur.*

and he offered to the believers the sweet chalice of his blood.³⁰⁵ The accusation of the Jews for the crucifixion of the Messiah becomes more an appeal to the profit the Christian believers have from Christ's death: 'Not understanding what you did, you worked for our cause', Quodvultdeus addresses the Jews.³⁰⁶ The polemics with Judaism serves, again, the catechetical and even mystagogical purpose of his sermons which aimed at the baptismal preparation of the *competentes*: to introduce the candidates to the mystery celebrated at baptism, but also to be able to respond to the reproaches from the Jews and other religious groups concerning, foremost, Christ's divinity.³⁰⁷

In his argumentation with the Jews, Quodvultdeus relies mostly on the Old Testament witnesses, consciously relying on the prescription of Deuteronomy 19:5, used also by Jesus in John 8:17 about the need for two witnesses to make a statement trustworthy.³⁰⁸ In this way, he employs, for instance, quotes from Isaiah 7:14 and Baruch 3:36–38 to provide an indication that Jesus is the expected Messiah, piling on then other messianic prophecies from Moses, that is, the Pentateuch, Daniel, Habacuc, or the Psalms, aligning them with Jesus' sayings from the Gospel of John.³⁰⁹ According to Jesus' interpretation, Abraham in the three visitors at Mamre (Genesis 18:1 ff.) had already seen the divine Persons of the Trinity, yet the Jews are not able to understand this.³¹⁰ For proving that it was Jesus who was promised as the Messiah, Quodvultdeus does not hesitate to bring pagan prophecies to his support, namely Virgil's *Bucolics* and the *Sibylline Oracles*.³¹¹

After all, the Jews are not portrayed only in the darkest colours. Jesus himself was a Jew, as were the Apostles whom he chose and who handed down the Christian faith.³¹² Quodvultdeus takes into account also Augustine's argument that the Jews, having the sacred books of their Law and being dispersed throughout all the world, can corroborate the Christian use of the Old Testament messianic prophecies in order for the whole world to believe in Christ.³¹³

305 A2 8. 7 (CCL 60: 465): *A Iudaeis enim inimicis amarum acetum bibit; et eis credentibus dulcem calicem sui sanguinis propinauit.*

306 CIPA 18. 1 (CCL 60: 252): *Sed non intelligentes actiones uestras, egistis causas nostras.*

307 A1 9. 13–14 (CCL 60: 448).

308 CIPA 11. 4; 16. 1 (CCL 60: 241, 248).

309 CIPA 11. 6–13. 10; S2 4. 3–4 (CCL 60: 241–244, 338 f.).

310 CIPA 5. 6–8 (CCL 60: 233).

311 CIPA 15. 3–16. 6 (CCL 60: 247–250).

312 S2 4. 2 (CCL 60: 338).

313 Aug. s. 200. 3; 201. 3; 373. 4; 374 auct = s. Dolbeau 23. 15 (PL 38: 1030, 1033, 1665; ed. Dolbeau 550).

The Jews, 'holding in their hands the lantern of the Law to show the others the way',³¹⁴ testify against the charges of the pagans that Christians forged their holy Scriptures.³¹⁵ What is more, Quodvultdeus claims that the Jews are, in fact, better than the heretics, because, at least, they did not divide the body of Christ.³¹⁶ Also, this fact supports the idea that Quodvultdeus's severe words against the Jews are not a sign of his anti-semitism (which would be an anachronism), but rather of an intense pronouncement against any denial of the divinity of Christ, which was, for him and for his Catholic believers, the core of the Christian doctrine and a *condicio sine qua non* of Christ's salvific mission and of the efficacy of the sacraments of the Church.

3.7 *Pagans*

Although the pagan polytheistic ideas of the population of Carthage might have been in retreat, this does not mean that pagan worship had vanished and that no one found it attractive any more in the years of Quodvultdeus's episcopacy.³¹⁷

Although there had existed since 399 imperial legislation that banned the pagan cult, the fact the edicts had to be repeated spoke for the continued pagan practices and festivities.³¹⁸ If no pagan rites were being celebrated in Carthage, the bishop would not have needed to reproach 'the entire city' for having sacrificed to 'evil spirits' their souls, looking 'at images of idols as they made sport throughout the night, a practice that has the name of 'Nocturnum'.³¹⁹ It also seems that they were not without pagans who were blaming Christianity for the coming disaster, because if the traditional sacrifices were being done properly, the barbarians would never conquer Africa.³²⁰ Similarly, Christian disputers, such as Fulgentius, would not have needed to address them in their discourses.³²¹ There seems to be, though, no more testimonies of the

314 S3 4. 12 (CCL 60: 355): *ferentes in manibus lucernam legis, ut alii uiam demonstraretis*.

315 CIPA 18. 7–8 (CCL 60: 253).

316 S1 13. 9 (CCL 60: 334).

317 Quodvultdeus recalls in his L 3. 38. 45 (CCL 60: 186) the incident from his youth with pagan statues that were worshiped in his home area. For the presence of pagan worship in Africa at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries, see Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 70; Harmless, *Augustine and the catechumenate*², 135–138.

318 CTh 16. 10. 17–20; 16. 5. 63 (SC 497: 330); Aug. *ciu.* 18. 54 (CCL 48: 653–656); L 3. 38. 41 (CCL 60: 183).

319 TB1 4. 12 (CCL 60: 12–13; tr. Kalkman 145): *Annon sacrificauit, qui imagines idolorum per notem ludentes, quod Nocturnum uocant, libentissime spectauit?*

320 TB2 3. 2 (CCL 60: 474).

321 Fulg., *rem.* 1. 17. 1 (CCL 91A: 665); Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 87. The existence of pagan

bloodshed between Christians and pagans that were witnessed in the previous generation.³²²

However, even more important were the attitudes of pagan worship that remained firmly rooted in the minds and hearts of the newly converted Christians. And it was the main purpose of the pre-baptismal catechesis to facilitate the rebirth of the *competentes* who were coming from a pagan background into life in the Church. The unicity of God and the incompatibility of the belief in this one God and the idolatrous cult of creatures would certainly be the bishop's concern.³²³ In Carthage, apart from the traditional Punic cult of deities and nature elements, such as stones, heaven, sun, or moon,³²⁴ the traditional Roman pantheon of 'Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Juno, Minerva, Venus and the other monstrosities' was worshipped.³²⁵ However, it was also the material or corporeal understanding of God that Quodvultdeus criticises, underlining the spiritual understanding of God in Catholic teaching.³²⁶

Quodvultdeus has to point out the specific character of the Christian faith and to move his audience to abandon their previous notions that remained much within them. He addresses his assembly: 'According to you, all those who worship the idols are still pagan. Watch carefully their foreheads and you will notice that they are deceitful Christians.'³²⁷ Christians and pagans mingled at the traditional pagan festivities, they went to see the games at the amphitheatre together, and they might return to the ancient rites and magic.³²⁸ Similarly to other bishops, such as Ambrose or Augustine, he had to know that the initial knowledge of these 'beginners' was only superficial and that they tended to bring with themselves to the Church not only many pagan conceptions but also elements of lifestyle that were not reconcilable with the life of the baptised. It might have been easy to destroy idols or temples, but there was still

priests and *flamines* is witnessed by archaeological evidence: see González Salinero, *Poder*, 57f.

322 Isola, 'Note sulle eresie', 87 recalls the slaughter of sixty pagans at Sufes after the Christians overthrew their statue of Hercules: see Aug. *ep.* 91. 8 (CSEL 34/2: 432f.). For the destruction of idols, see also Aug. *ciu.* 18. 54 (CCL 48: 655). The survival of paganism is outlined vividly by González Salinero, *Poder*, 49–58.

323 González Salinero, *Poder*, 51.

324 S2 2. 5, 13–17 (CCL 60: 335–337); Finn, *Creedal Homilies*, 14.

325 S2 3. 3–4 (CCL 60: 337; tr. Finn 54): *Iouem, Saturnum, Martem, Iononam, Mineruam, Venerem, et cetera portenta ...*

326 S3 3. 11 (CCL 60: 353).

327 A1 9. 12 (CCL 60: 448): *Aestimas omnes istos adhuc esse paganos. Eorum frontes inspicie, et inuenies perfidos Christianos.*

328 Isola, *Cristiani*, 83.

danger that 'the devil' would 'fashion them anew in the hearts of Christians'.³²⁹ This obviously involved a contradiction between the way the catechumens and the baptised Christians were expected to live and the all-present enticement of the irrational and impious spectacles or the shameless scenes in the theatre.³³⁰

Quodvultdeus addresses the issue of the pagan cult that belonged to the 'worst of usurpers'³³¹ on various occasions. He tries to show that adoring stone or other elements cannot bring a man a true and eternal life³³² but these elements rather point to their Creator who alone is to be worshipped.³³³ Nor can the pagan deities who were mere mortal men be gods as they are visible.³³⁴ The invisibility of the God worshipped by the Christians was a greater problem for the ancient population than for ours, as the worshiped deities were always personified by a material object. That is why the bishop takes care to explain that God creates *ex nihilo* and not from some primary matter³³⁵ and that the only way they can perceive him is to watch him not with physical eyesight but with the 'eyes of the heart'.³³⁶

Quodvultdeus uses in his argumentation against pagan views a repertory of scriptural testimonies to show that the idols are powerless and only God is almighty,³³⁷ but he does not hesitate to quote in length pagan sources, especially the Sibylline Oracles, as other Christian writers, such as Lactantius or Augustine, also did.³³⁸ But even in the altercation with paganism, against Juno, the sister and wife of Jupiter, Quodvultdeus contrasts Mary, ever virgin and mother.³³⁹ What he tries to do is to ignite amazement in the minds of his audience for the Church's spectacles that would lessen their admiration for the pagan spectacles and rites. Playing his trump cards, he beats a tightrope walker with Peter's crossing of the sea and the immorality of mimes with the chaste Susanna and Joseph.³⁴⁰

329 S1 4. 34 (CCL 60: 316; Finn 33): *ne quod ipse Dominus Saluator noster uirtute ac maiestate sua idola eradicauit et templa rursus in cordibus Christianorum diabolus fabricet idola*. Similarly, also Aug. s. 81. 8 (PL 38: 499); González Salinero, *Poder*, 52 f.

330 S1 2. 10; CIPA 4. 8 (CCL 60: 231 f.); González Salinero, *Poder*, 54 f.

331 S2 2. 1 (CCL 60: 335): *pessimum inuasorem*.

332 S2 2. 5 (CCL 60: 335 f.).

333 S2 2. 13–22 (CCL 60: 336 f.).

334 S2 3. 3–4 (CCL 60: 337).

335 S2 3. 2 (CCL 60: 337).

336 S2 3. 5 (CCL 60: 338): *uidetur oculis cordis*. See also A1 9. 3; AQH 7. 27 (CCL 60: 448, 297).

337 S2 2. 8–9; C 6. 19; AQH 7. 11–12 (CCL 60: 336, 412, 294 f.).

338 CIPA 16. 3–4 (CCL 60: 248–250).

339 S1 2. 13 (CCL 60: 308).

340 S1 2. 14–16 (CCL 60: 308).

Quodvultdeus's goal is not to bring the pagans to perdition, but instead to correct their views and bring them to the 'Catholic faith'.³⁴¹ Moreover, what is even more important, he prepares his audience to stand firm when their faith would be challenged by the pagans to whom they would not be able to show a visible object to worship.³⁴²

4 Return to the Catholic Church

Those who did not belong to the body of the Church, but rather to the devil, were not doomed forever: Quodvultdeus sees hope for them in the universality of Christ's death on the cross, as affirmed in Romans 5:6: *Christ died for the godless*.³⁴³ However, for the heretics, as well as for those who strayed from the teaching of the Catholic Church, there exists, according to Quodvultdeus, only one way to salvation: to return to their true Mother.³⁴⁴ Through 'the narrow gate of Christ's side the reformed robber, the penitent Jew, every convert from paganism' can enter the body of Christ.³⁴⁵ The redeemed thief becomes an image of anyone who can be turned into a 'confessor' when he professes his faith in Christ's divinity.³⁴⁶ Even the persecutors of the Church can become her defenders, as happened to Paul.³⁴⁷ Moreover, it is also the mission of the Church not only to 'deeply lament the dead', but also to 'recall her wandering children'.³⁴⁸ In *Liber promissionum*, Quodvultdeus also makes sure that there is a possibility for those healed from the leprosy of heresy to return to the camp, and after being examined by the priests if they have been really cleansed from the blemish of their disease, they can remain there.³⁴⁹

There are passages in his pre-baptismal catecheses that reveal that Quodvultdeus was less a *Kirchenpolitiker* than a shepherd of his assembly who

341 A1 8. 1, 12 (CCL 60: 446f.).

342 A1 9. 1–2 (CCL 60: 447f.).

343 S1 6. 16 (CCL 60: 322).

344 S1 13. 11–13 (CCL 60: 334).

345 TB1 8. 3 (CCL 60: 436; tr. Kalkman 156): *per angustam portam lateris Christi ingressus est latro mutatus, poenitens Iudaeus, conuersus omnis Paganus*; the text reproaches the Arians, that they have not yet done the same.

346 S1 6. 17 (CCL 60: 322).

347 S2 5. 19 (CCL 60: 342).

348 S2 12. 9 (CCL 60: 348): *errantes filios reuocat, mortuos grauiter dolet*.

349 L 2. 6. 11 (CCL 60: 82). Quodvultdeus develops the idea that he found in Aug. *qu. eu.* 2. 40. 4 (CCL 44B: 103) and *lepr.* (CCL 69: 227 ff.).

invited various religious 'seekers' to find Christ in the Catholic Church.³⁵⁰ He says that they are already many who had converted from Paganism, Judaism, and various Christian heresies.³⁵¹ He speaks much more as someone who is genuinely convinced of what he says than as a political *Spielmacher* who tries to gain the religious allegiance of the crowd, upon whom he could exercise any power.



There is no doubt that Quodvultdeus devotes to the heresies plenty of space in his pre-baptismal catecheses. He is encouraged to do so in a particular historical situation of adversity that was affecting his Church, but at the same time his discourse becomes a way of moving his listeners to go forward and deeper. The anti-heretical polemics has for him, as for other Church Fathers, also a catechetical and revelatory function, where Quodvultdeus is convinced that there is only one way that leads to God: the way of the whole Christ who is both God and man and who is confessed as such in the Nicene Creed. He remains in the tradition of his predecessor, especially of the Latin Fathers, whom he knows and whose works he develops in his sermons. He used formidable and implacable rhetorics; however, his language does not show personal hatred, but rather a disgust of their errors which do not lead, according to his belief, to the truth and to the true God. He treats the heresies as something that pretends to be true but what prevents people from grasping God and his knowledge—and also to salvation and to the true life that is linked to the knowledge of God. To this knowledge, Christ is the Way, and a christological error also has an impact upon the spiritual life and progress of the Christian already here on earth and it can also affect his expectations and fulfilment of such hope of eternal salvation. The anti-heretical discourse is not, therefore, a mere hairsplitting, a sign of dogmatism, or an effort to affirm the bishop's or the Church's power: it is more a fulfilment of the mission of the bishop who is the shepherd of God's people whose duty it is to teach the doctrine that Christ gave to his Apostles and their successors and to defend the Church before ideas that are not true.

The anti-heretical language that he uses could be understood as harsh by a modern reader; it needs to be placed in the context of the liturgy and the bishop's ministry. The studied works are not primarily anti-heretical; they rather focus on affirming the doctrine of the Church and on the adherence of the

³⁵⁰ UQF 6. 3 (CCL 60: 403).

³⁵¹ A1 8. 11–12 (CCL 60: 447).

newly baptised to the Church as a means of salvation. Quodvultdeus's approach to the heretics in the course of his exposition of the creed has a catechetical function, and it is not exceptional in the Latin tradition of catechesis during the fourth and fifth centuries. His use of approaching the very probably absent heretics and other non-Catholics in his preaching helped to entertain the public and deflect from their annoyance at the length of his speeches. In this way, the bishop was able to offer a kind of new spectacle that would draw his audience in instead of the type preferred by the theatre of pagan worship.

There is no doubt that Quodvultdeus lived in a troubled season of the Church's history. It seems to be an experience of all churches operating in times of persecution to use an apologetic or polemical approach much more than in peaceful times when there is less need to strengthen the Christian identity of the believers and their allegiance to the Church. In this way, I would opt to reassess the up-to-now strong notion of Quodvultdeus as an anti-heretical polemicist and encourage a depiction of him more as a man dedicated to his ministry as a bishop during an extremely tough time for the Church that he tried to serve.

What is more, when addressing the crucial elements of Christian doctrine through apostrophes directed to heretics or adherents of other religions, he makes clear that their positions do not allow the believers to enter and remain in the spousal mystery of Christ and the Church, whom he calls Mother and Bride. Much more than anti-heretical polemics, he makes doctrinal argumentation a part of his mystagogical method that aimed to understand deeply the Christian mystery that the *competentes* and believers were expected to live, after they finished their baptismal preparation with all its rites, were baptised, and started to nourish themselves from the Lord's table even in times when the Church and her teaching was not in vogue: as was the case of Quodvultdeus's Carthage.

The anti-heretical, anti-Jewish, and anti-pagan discourse of Quodvultdeus in his pre-baptismal catecheses, can be understood as an attempt to make his audience grasp the profound theological consequences of their faith in God and their baptism. In fact, for Quodvultdeus, as for any sound theologian and minister of the Church, theology and spirituality go hand in hand. Quodvultdeus's ecclesiology of the only Mother Church, the virginal spouse of Christ, can be glimpsed behind his altercation with various non-Catholic views. Not only does a heresy make one alien to the Church, it also hinders him in knowing the true Christ and God, and obstructs his path of entering into the mystery of Christ. Baptism as uniting with Christ in his death and an incorrect view of Christ would make the baptism to be received ineffectual. What is more, the ability to read Scripture typologically allows the neophyte to grasp the mean-

ing of the baptismal rites, but also to discover Christ, true God and true man, in Scripture as he hears it and would hear it in the Church. In this way, Quodvult-deus's anti-heretical argumentation can be understood as part of the bishop's mystagogical method, as its scope is not to defeat the absent religious enemies, but rather to leave open the way of grasping the core of the Christian message, according to which the baptised would be called to live in the days and years to come.

Conclusion

Quodvultdeus's generation lived in the time of the increasingly rapid decay of the Roman West. In Africa, this decline could be seen first: in only a decade, so many things changed for the populace of North Africa. However, if we read Quodvultdeus, and other disciples of Augustine, we cannot read them solely from our perspective, as if we knew how it all ended. They did not see and they did not know what was to happen. Many a security of their world might have been declining, but they did not see themselves as one of the last generations of the great Roman civilisation. However, the Christian bishops also saw the downside of the Roman splendour: the human cruelty that was shown not only during the gladiatorial games and other entertainment in the circus, but they also perceived the limitations of pagan worship, and still they were convinced that it was through their teaching and other pastoral work that they were bringing God's light and a new quality into the life of the society and of individual people.

Bishop Quodvultdeus still seems to be more a pastoral than political figure. Despite the political and religious pressure from the Vandals upon the Catholic Roman population in the years of Geiseric's conquest of Africa, the bishop did not seem to counter the new ruler's power and its abuse politically; he instead tried to prepare the members of the Church for what would be coming. He nonetheless proved to be a figure of influence and could be perceived by the king as representing the political and religious opponents of the residents of Carthage to the Arian Vandals. The exacerbated and figurative language he used to describe especially the Arians would certainly not help him convince the Vandals that his intentions were only religious. That is plausibly why he was doomed to be exiled before long, together with his clergy. The reasoning behind such a move could have been Geiseric's confidence that, without a spiritual leader, the remaining Catholic believers would eventually give up on their faith and dissolve amongst the politically and religiously loyal inhabitants.

Was Quodvultdeus trying to salvage the remnants of the Catholic Church in Africa with all its venerable history and tradition that he perceived going to ruin as Augustine did before in besieged Hippo? This is also plausible, given his early episcopal consecration in 432/34. His pre-baptismal sermons that would be generally dated between this date and 440¹ also suggest that with

1 The dating of singular sermons, treated in corresponding sections, remains rather vague, which is quite normal also with other homiletical literature, including that of Augustine.

the Vandal advances in Africa, the bishop might have felt more and more the threat the invaders represented to the not-at-all-perfect Church he was in charge of. He possibly knew how unstable the allegiance of his congregation to the Catholic faith was, and this might also explain the ever-present emphasis on the motherhood of the only Church that could procure salvation for them.

The comparison of the pre-baptismal curriculum in Carthage and Hippo proved very enlightening, although the results do not bring more precise information, quite the opposite. Although the affinity of the catechumenate procedure in the same ecclesiastical regions can be presupposed, the scarcity of the extant witnesses should not tempt the researcher to fill in the gaps in one source with the information from another from a different place or period. The image of the ancient baptismal preparation in different cities might become, in this way, less vivid than we would like it to be; the result, however, would bring more coherence and responsiveness to the practice, the thinking, and the work of the authors of various sources. This also proved true of Quodvultdeus's catecheses: we know hardly anything about the beginnings of the catechumenate, as well as the other stages. We know there existed a *signatio* at the entrance into the catechumenate, we can suppose the catechumens gave their name for baptism, and we can recognise that intense time of the Lenten preparation should have prepared them well for the baptism at Easter. Quodvultdeus brings a rare testimony of the rite of scrutiny, comprising of exorcisms and the renunciation of the devil, which was somehow connected to the rite of the handing over of the creed; however, we do not know if there existed any *redditio symboli* or at what occasion the six catecheses on the scrutiny and the creed were really delivered. Quodvultdeus brings forward a deep and theologically-rooted theology of baptism, but we do not know anything about the procedure of the baptismal rites in Carthage in his time.

Quodvultdeus was undoubtedly more interested in transmitting the baptismal theology that pumped through his catecheses and the celebrated rites than in the description of these liturgical procedures. Not only was he plausibly still under the influence of the *disciplina arcani*, but, even more likely, he did not feel the need for this, as the audience experienced these rites with their own eyes and bodies and would not need to be informed about them. Furthermore, there might have existed baptismal catecheses that would touch on even this aspect of the sacraments, but we do not have any witness that would come down to us that would prove it. On top of that, the basic baptismal attitude of renouncing the devil, his pomps, and angels, and professing one's new allegiance to Christ the Master and to the faith expressed in the baptismal creed pervades all of Quodvultdeus's exposition and other rites

and stages of the catechumenate or the *competentes* preparation. This brings us to one significant aspect of Quodvultdeus's theology and that is the baptismal connection with the mystery of Christ and the centrality of Christ's cross that can be entered through baptism, and continuously renewed in the Eucharist.

The other pivotal pole of Quodvultdeus's theology is represented in his ecclesiology where he stands firm in the African tradition of the one and only virginal Mother Church who is the spouse of Christ. The bishop shares the vision of the unity of the Head and the body that form one Christ so that any baptised believer shares in the spousal union of Christ and his Church. To teach his *competentes* and baptised believers, he uses two traditional tools, represented by the typological exegesis and mystagogical method that he applies to both the biblical text and to the sacraments to make sure his listeners understand that they make up part of the one and continuous action of God throughout human history that would culminate in the eschatological future and eternal life in God. That is also why Quodvultdeus's pre-baptismal discourses can be called mystagogical catecheses, as they try to bring the candidates for baptism to a deeper understanding of the faith they are to receive.

In view of this perspective, Quodvultdeus's anti-heretical language becomes one of the tools of strengthening the believers' allegiance to the Church and her faith. It should not be read as a polemic with a real opponent; in fact, its context is that of baptismal catechesis. The warning before the heresies and other religious groups makes, therefore, part of the fundamental baptismal attitude that was described above. On the one hand, Quodvultdeus helps his audience renounce the devil and the heretical views about God, understood as part of the devil's domain. On the other hand, expounding the heretical notions of God, he affirms the correct views as expressed in the baptismal creed. More than a power struggle, the polemics with heresies, Jews, and pagans can be understood as part of the spiritual struggle the neophytes would enter with the scrutinies and the *traditio symboli* as an expression of their baptismal renunciation of the devil and the profession of faith.

The attractiveness of Quodvultdeus's ministry and his discourses does not abide in the theological brilliance of an Augustine or other stars of the Patristic sky: it is not the originality that makes it worthwhile. In this aspect, it is not unlike other works of his generation that remain in Augustine's shadow. However, it was Augustine's doctrine on Christ and on the Church that encouraged many Christians in a changing world, full of shifting situations that did not look tempting. One of them, Prosper of Aquitaine, expressed it poignantly: the heroes of his times were not anymore the martyrs, but bishops of 'strong figures who could tame the unjust powers of the world and protect otherwise helpless

communities from the ravages of war'.² Quodvultdeus was not such a political figure as Leo, who as the bishop of Rome a decade later tried to protect the populace of the city from Attila's and Geiseric's sacks with much or little success in 452 and 455. His ministry as a bishop concentrated, as his discourses suggest, on a spiritual formation and defence of the Christian inhabitants of Carthage. We do not know anything about the Church of Carthage helping those who suffered the Vandal invasion, but we can presume that Quodvultdeus's activity did not stop at preaching.

There cannot be a doubt that Quodvultdeus put much effort into his ministry and he did not renounce his task as a bishop but took it very seriously. Augustine's doctrine on grace did not lead him to an idleness and a passive waiting for what the future brings; convinced about God's activity in the world that remains the same on the pages of Scripture and in the life of his Church today, he did not rely only on his strength and tried to give those entrusted to him his best. He did not waver from offering them sophisticated pieces of allegorical or typological exegesis that might have been seen, at first glance, as distant to the ordinary life of the ordinary people of Carthage, pointing high above their heads. However, despite Quodvultdeus's lack of Augustine's geniality, his audience might have been fascinated by the beauty he drew from the treasures of Scripture and the Church's teaching, similar to the medieval men and women struck by the splendour of great cathedrals full of art directing the 'inner eye of faith' towards the mystery of Christ and the Church; and as their existence, enlightened by beams of light coming through stained glass, could also be enlightened by God's favour, grace, and beauty, so Quodvultdeus's listeners, charmed with their bishop's biblical and liturgical exegesis, could have been drawn to a fascination with God, his action in this world and in their life, and with the Church. Despite the extremely arduous conditions of his times, Quodvultdeus was bringing a certain hope into the lives of his flock, tossed by the chaos of social changes, fear, dismay, and angst of what was to come, and also by their sin and by the sin of others they were confronted with. He managed to show them that their petty lives were also part of the one history of salvation that goes on from Adam, the Old and the New Testaments, up to their times, to the time of the Church that does not represent the end, but points towards the glory that has God prepared for his believers, his saints. In a world endangered with different kinds of peril, he offered to the *competentes* and the already baptised believers the faith as a way that gives man a hope,

2 Steven Muhlberger, *The Fifth Century Chroniclers. Prosper, Hydatius, and the Gallic Chronicler of 452* (Leeds: F. Cairns, 1990), 131 on Prosper. *chron.* 1367 (MGH AA 9: 482).

a direction, and a strength to go on. Quodvultdeus is not an original rhetorician, he is not a philosopher, his theology is not innovatory, but in the first place he is a bishop who was entrusted with the care of the salvation of his church. I suggest Quodvultdeus's qualities should be looked upon from this perspective and it is also where today's ministers of the Church, especially those who prepare catechumens for baptism, could look for inspiration in their task.

Was Quodvultdeus successful in his efforts, after all? If we take just the strict data, he would not do well. He had to leave his Church of Carthage, and the city was left without a Catholic bishop for many years. Many believers who listened to his sermons did not persist in the faith they received at their baptism and they lost it; many others continued to be persecuted. The Catholic Church in Africa did not receive a better standing in the society for the entire era of the Vandal reign in Africa. He died in exile. Therefore, Quodvultdeus's mission looks like a failure. However, did not Augustine encounter a similar fate? At the close of his life, when the Vandals besieged Hippo, a third of his congregation fled, another third would die, and only small remains of what he had built endured. We can even hypothesise that many of his flock changed their way from Catholic to Arian: for many reasons that can even be understandable from the human point of view, as the outlook of life in a society dominated by the Arian Vandals seemed to be more favourable.

Undeniably, Quodvultdeus's fate could be assessed as a tragical one if looked upon without the eyes of the faith. However, his catecheses prove that his perspective was precisely one of faith. For him, the destiny of man would not end with the last breath here on earth, but all earthly existence was directed to the glory of God in eternal life. However, the historical evidence suggests that even from the human perspective, the time and effort Quodvultdeus dedicated to the preparation of new Christians was not altogether in vain. When Quodvultdeus died, King Geiseric agreed, as part of the diplomatic negotiations, that the city of Carthage could receive a new Catholic bishop. It seems that Deogratias—who was chosen for this office—found some Catholic Christians in the city.³ And even much later and despite Huneric's persecution in 480s, when Justinian reclaimed Africa for Byzantium in the 530s, there were still some Catholic Christians.⁴ We do not know the individual stories of the

3 Vict. Vit. 1. 24–27 (ed. Lancel 106–109) shows Deogratias's care for the refugees from Rome sacked by Geiseric in 455; this would not be imaginable without other persons loyal to the bishop.

4 Merrills and Miles, 201 f. nonetheless show how difficult the situation of the Catholic Church was at that time.

listeners of Quodvultdeus's sermons and it is, therefore, not exactly straightforward to appraise the success of the bishop's sacramental and catechetical care. As with any such effort in any time of history, it would be possible to evaluate it only from the eschatological perspective.

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Biblical Index

1 Old Testament

Genesis		33:6	135
1:10	279	33:20	243–244
1:12	279	36:1f.	84
1:18	279	41	127
1:21	279	44:2–5	194
1:25	279	44:9	228, 251
1:31	279	50:7	251
3:4–5	280	61	194
4	249–250	67:20	252
6:1–8:5	81	76:3	142
15:7–16	77	77:20	233
18:1 ff.	295	84:11	194
22	81	91:8	84
		138	153
		138:3	152
Exodus		Song of Songs	
1–14	241	1:6	253
12	246	4:1	251
12–13	218, 241	4:3	251
12–14	240, 245	8:5	251
12:8–10	243, 245		
12:9–11	243	Wisdom	
12:10	244–245	7:6	156
14	218, 241, 243		
17:6	233		
Leviticus		Isaiah	
13:46	275	5:1–9a	90
Deuteronomy		7:14	295
19:5	295	45:8	83
		53:2	252
2 Kings		Jeremiah	
6	197	17:5	280
Job		Baruch	
14:4	196	3:36–38	295
Psalms		Daniel	
11:9	269	7:25	78
18:6	147	12:7	78
22	254		

2 New Testament

Matthew

5:29	191
7:15–20	84
7:22–23	258
10:23	48
14:23–31	144
14:24–33	143
14:25–31	240
18:9	191
27:5–7	249

Mark

4	213, 215, 248, 254
4:7	84
4:18	84
9:46	191

Luke

11:9	115
14:19	213–214, 248
15:11–32	202
24	199

John

1:1	286
1:1–2	285
1:3	286
1:14	189
1:29	243
2:1–11	90
6:55	114
6:56	115
6:62–69	254
8:17	295
8:56	285, 288
10:30	277, 282
13:10	290
14:6	145, 277
14:9	281
14:9–10	281
14:9–11	285
14:28	285
21:11	67, 78

Acts

3:1–11	149
4:32	159, 191
6:1–6	59

Romans

5:6	299
6:3	249
10:9–17	124
10:13–14	124
13:12	203, 236–239
13:13–14:1	203

1 Corinthians

3:6–9	213, 248
3:7	77
3:16	178
5:8	245
10:2	233
10:3–4	233
11:19	265
13:7–8	79
15:47	141

2 Corinthians

5:17	141
11:33	48

Galatians

6:14	243
------	-----

1 Timothy

1:7	177
2:5	147

2 Timothy

3:15	79
4:9	93

James

5:16	149
------	-----

1 Peter

2:5	178, 255
-----	----------

1John

2:15	93
2:16	177
3:16	48

Revelation

12	262
12:1-4	261
12:4	78

Index of Ancient Sources

Acta martyrum Scillitanorum (Act. Scill.)

1 21

Al-Idrīsī

Nuzhat al-mushtāq fi ikhtirāq al-āfāq

104 f. 16

Ambrose

De fide (fid.)

1. 13. 79 285

3. 10. 65 286

De Helia et ieiunio (Hel.)

21. 79 104

De mysteriis (myst.)

1. 1 103, 169

6. 29 251

7. 35–41 251

9. 51 240

9. 55 251

9. 57–58 251

De sacramentis (sacr.)

1. 2. 4–8 98

1. 4. 11–12 240

1. 6. 20–33 240

2. 2. 3 169

3. 2. 14–15 251

4. 4. 18 240

5. 2. 5–6 251

5. 2. 8–11 251

5. 4. 20–29 124

Explanatio symboli (expl. symb.)

1 104

2 270

3 104

3–5 104

4 172

5–8 104

9 105

Expositio psalmi cxviii (expos. ps. cxviii)

1. 16 f. 209

5. 34 144

14. 20 144, 188

16. 4 188

Athanasius

Vita Antonii (v. Ant.)

40 120

Augustine

Ad Crescentium (Cresc.)

2. 5. 7 110

Breviculus collations cum Donatistis (brevic.)

108

Confessiones (conf.)

1. 1. 1 105

1. 11. 17 101, 110

1. 11. 18 101–102, 113

3–5 21

3. 1. 1–3 16

3. 1. 1–3. 2. 4 102

3. 3. 6–3. 7. 12 102

3. 11. 19 107

4. 2. 2 102

4. 7. 12 16

5. 8. 14 16

5. 13. 23–5. 14. 24 102

5. 14. 24 103

6. 3. 3–4 102, 110

6. 5. 7–8 102

6. 8. 13 18

7. 14. 20 142

7. 18. 24 189

7. 21. 27 142

8. 2. 3–8. 5. 12 103

8. 4. 9–8. 5. 10 107

8. 12. 29 203

8. 12. 29–30 103

9. 5. 13 103

9. 6. 14 58, 103, 105

9. 10. 25 177

10 176

10. 1. 1 105, 223

10. 6. 8 ff. 177

10. 8. 13 176

10. 17. 26 177

10. 35. 54–39. 64 177

10. 36. 59 102

11. 1. 1 223

- Contra Adimantum Manichei discipulum* (c. *Adim.*)
 21 197
- Contra Faustum* (c. *Faust.*)
 6. 9 202
 12. 30 244
 16. 9 202
- Contra Gaudentium Donatistarum episcopum* (c. *Gaud.*)
 1. 12. 13 218
- Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* (c. *Iul. Imp.*)
 3. 199 120
 6. 21 119
- Contra litteras Petiliani* (c. *litt. Pet.*)
 2. 105. 239 129
- De agone Christiano* (agon.)
 1. 1 120
 1. 1–2 119
- De anima et eius origine* (an. et or.)
 1. 10. 12 127
 3. 9. 12 107, 127
- De baptismo* (bapt.)
 3. 10. 15 127
 3. 16. 21 129
 4. 3. 4 138
 4. 21. 28 138
 5. 8. 10 189
 5. 20. 28 127
 5. 22. 30 138
 6. 4. 6 138
 6. 12. 19 138
 6. 25. 47 128
 7. 3. 5 138
- De bono coniugali* (b. coniug.)
 18. 21 191, 230
- De catechizandis rudibus* (cat. rud.)
 1. 1 75
 2. 3 75, 106
 2. 4–3. 5 106
 6. 10 107
 13. 19 106
 14. 21 110
 20. 34 241
 26. 50 107–110
- De civitate Dei* (ciu.)
 1. 9 142
 2. 4 68
 2. 26 68
 10. 29 142
15. 20 118
 16. 30 109
 17. 4 129
 17. 9 129
 18 107
 18. 23 208
 18. 51 280
 18. 54 296–297
 21. 25 280
 22. 8 128
 22. 17 251
- De consensu euangelistarum* (cons. eu.)
 2. 4. 13 118
- De cura pro mortuis gerenda* (cura mort.)
 12. 15 116
- De doctrina christiana* (doctr. chr.)
 1. 4 142
 1. 10 ff. 142
 1. 35. 39 110
 1. 37. 41 110
 2. 16. 25 77
 4. 6 81
- De duabus animabus* (duab. an.)
 10 121
- De fide et operibus* (f. et op.)
 1. 1f. 117
 6. 8 117–118
 6. 9 103, 111, 116
 7. 11 116–117
 8. 13 116
 9. 14 127
 13. 17 116
 13. 19 117
 15. 19 116
 18. 33 116–117
 19. 35 116
 20. 36 116
 26. 48 117
- De fide et symbolo* (f. et symb.)
 1. 1 270
 2. 3 270
 3. 3 270
 4. 5 270
 4. 7–8 270
 6 189
 6. 13 270
 7. 14 270
 9. 18–20 270
 10. 21 270

<i>De haeresibus (haer.)</i>		80	18
cap.	266	80. 2	27
praef. 1	62	83. 3	109
46. 6–8	276	85. 19	287
46. 7f.	144	97. 1	138
46. 8–10	278	101. 2. 8	109
46. 9	59–60, 73	102	18
46. 13	278	102. 15	127
46. 15	277	103	18
86	22	109. 15	202
<i>De nuptiis et concupiscentia (nupt. et concup.)</i>		118. 24. 3–4	114
1. 23. 26	119	124. 7	15
<i>De peccatorum meritis et remissione (pecc. mer.)</i>		146	18
2. 26. 42	109	147	18
<i>De quantitate animae (an. quant.)</i>		147. 7	27
34. 77	103	148. 10	15
<i>De sermone Domini in monte (s. dom. m.)</i>		149. 1	138
1. 6. 17	109	<i>Epistula ad catholicos (ep. cath.)</i>	
<i>De symbolo ad catechumenos (symb.)</i>		18. 46	24
1	121–122	<i>Epistulae (ep.)</i>	
2	120	5*. 1	128
2. 4	270	10*	15
2. 5	123, 270	11*	34
3. 8	123	21. 3	202
6. 14	124	21. 4	202
7. 15	121	23. 4	128
8. 16	123, 270	29	114
<i>De trinitate (trin.)</i>		41. 1	75
2. 5. 7	287	54. 9	117
5. 2. 3	287	54. 10	126
<i>De unico baptismo contra Petilianum (un. bapt.)</i>		55. 19. 35	129
11. 19	110	88. 9	218
<i>Enarrationes in Psalmos (en. Ps.)</i>		91. 8	297
9. 10	121	108. 2	218
23. 10	170	119. 1	285
25. 2. 5	170	136	30
25. 2. 13–14	114	137	30
29. 1. 5	170	199. 12	15
33. 2. 7	170	213	152
32. 1	138	220. 7	35
37. 16	197	222	62
39. 1	290	222. 2	61
39. 10	112, 114	222. 3	275
41. 1	127	224	62
49. 13	202	224. 1	61
50. 1	114	224. 2	62
57. 5	111	227	107
59. 2	109	228	60, 62
		228. 5	54

<i>Expositio quaerundam propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos (exp. prop. Rm.)</i>		50. 7	114
40. 48. 4–6	197	56. 1	211
<i>In epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos tractatus (ep. Io. tr.)</i>		56. 1. 1	124
1. 5	142	56. 2. 2	125
<i>In Iohannis euangelium tractatus (Io. eu. tr.)</i>		56. 3. 4	125
1. 1	170	56. 4. 5	124
3. 18	170	56. 11. 15	118
4. 13	113	56. 12	139
5. 20	170	57. 1	124, 211
6. 1	170	57. 2	124
6. 13	170	57. 12–13	125
6. 16	218	57. 13	139
11. 1	112	58. 1. 1	111, 122, 124, 126, 211
11. 3	112	58. 2. 2	122
11. 4	112	58. 9. 10	118, 145
12. 2	111	58. 10. 12	125
12. 3	112, 139	58. 11. 13	126
17. 6	286	59A. 2	205
33. 3	128	59auct. 1	124, 211
44. 2	110, 112	59auct. 4. 7	126
48. 8	286	62. 1	189
50. 2	108, 244	62. 12	291
55. 1	244	67	113
59. 2	189	75. 2	144
67. 2	202	75. 4	144
80. 3	234, 240	81. 4	191
96. 3	112, 138	81. 8	298
118. 5	108, 127, 129	81. 9	30
<i>Quaestiones (qu.)</i>		97A. 3	113
2. 73	277	112. 3	214
<i>Quaestiones evangeliorum (qu. eu.)</i>		113A. 1	30–31
2. 40. 2	275	115. 4	127
2. 40. 4	299	120. 3	129
2. 43	109	124. 1	112
<i>Praeceptum (reg. 3)</i>		125. 6	128
3. 1. 2	230	132. 1	111–112, 115
<i>Psalmus contra partem Donati (ps. c. Don.)</i>		132. 2 f.	146
44–46	24	142auct	111, 113
<i>Retractationes (retr.)</i>		142auct. 1	170
1. 16. 1	21	145. 5	120
<i>Sermones (s.)</i>		163. 3	138
7D. 1	170	184. 1	145
18. 1	119	185. 1–2	194
20	75	189. 2	194
22D. 23	170	189. 4	145
22D. 26	170	191. 2	194
49. 8	112–113	192. 1	194
		200. 3	295
		201. 3	295

204D. 5	178	229O. 3	129
205. 1	117	229R–V	129
205. 2	118	251. 1	161
205. 3	118	252. 3	144
206. 2	118	252. 4	140, 144
208. 1	118	258. 2	128
210. 1	126	260A. 2	218
210. 7	117	260C. 1	110
210. 10	118	260C. 7	129
212. 1	121	272. 1	169
212. 2	121–122	293A auct. 16	218
213. 1	122	294. 11. 12	128
213. 2	121	296. 6	30
213. 4	121	296. 9	30
213. 8	123	301A. 8	110, 114
213. 9	125	306B. 1	139, 146
213. 11	118, 121–122	324. 1	129
214. 1	121	341auct. 23	170
214. 3	123	341auct. 26	170
214. 10	123	352. 2	117
215	122, 151	352. 3	127
215. 1	121, 127, 166	352. 6f.	117
215. 6	123	359. 4	111
215. 7	270	359. 5	218
216	151	359B. 6	113
216. 1	116	359B. 20	113
216. 2	141	359B. 23	113
216. 4	141	362. 31	113
216. 6	127	368. 3	121
216. 7	121	373. 4	295
216. 10	118, 121	374auct. 15	295
218. 1	126	376A. 1	129
223. 1	129	378	129
223. 3	114	392. 1	116
223A. 5	113	398. 1	121–122
223B. 2	169	398. 2	120
223K. 1	169	398. 2. 4	270
226. 1	129	398. 2. 5	123, 270
227	129	398. 3. 8	123
228. 1	116, 129	398. 6. 14	124
228. 2	148	398. 7. 15	121
228. 3	129	398. 8. 16	123, 270
228. 3	129	400. 2	145
228B. 1	129	400. 5	145
229. 1	116	Caillau 2. 5. 1–2	202
229. 3	129	Casin. 2. 114–115	113
229A	118, 129	Denis 2. 5	113
229A. 1	126	Denis 17. 8	110, 114
229E–O	129	Denis 18. 1	139, 146

Sermones (s.) (cont.)

Denis 24. 1	30–31
Dolbeau 2. 6	113
Dolbeau 2. 20	113
Dolbeau 2. 23	113
Dolbeau 3. 16	218
Dolbeau 7	111
Dolbeau 7. 4	113
Dolbeau 23. 15	295
Guelf. 1. 11	118, 121–122
Guelf. 7	118, 129
Guelf. 7. 1	126
Guelf. 8. 1	129
Guelf. 17. 3	129
Mai 94. 1	110
Mai 94. 7	129
Poque 1. 1	124, 211
Poque 1. 4. 7	126
<i>Soliloquia</i> (sol.)	
1. 4	142

Ausonius

<i>Ordo urbium nobilium</i> (ordo)	
2	16

Babylonian Talmud

Pesachim 116b	169
---------------	-----

Barnabas (Ps.-)

<i>Epistula</i> (ep. Barn.)	
18. 1–21. 1	273

Canons of Hippolytus (can. Hipp.)

12	96
----	----

Capreolus

<i>Epistulae</i> (ep.)	
1	41, 74

Cassiodorus

<i>Chronica</i> (chron.)	
1214f.	36
1215	35
1225	38
1263	40
1347	39
<i>De institutione divinarum litterarum</i> (inst.)	
1. 1	67

Cassius Dio

72. 11f.	32
----------	----

Clement of Alexandria

<i>Stromata</i> (strom.)	
2. 18. 96	97

Clement of Rome

<i>Epistula ad Corinthios</i> (1 Clem)	
2. 5	94

Ps.-Clement

<i>Epistula ad Iacobum fratrem Domini</i> (ep. Iacob)	
14. 15	143

Chronica Gallica a. CCCCLII et DXI (chron. Gal.)

a. 452	17
a. 352. 55	29

Chronicon paschale (chron. pasch.)

35

Cicero

<i>Pro P. Sestio</i>	
20	143

Council of Elvira (conc. Elib.)

can. 4	97
can. 42	97
can. 73	97

Codex Iustiniani (CI)

1. 11. 4	18
9. 25	35

Codex Theodosianus (CTh)

1. 5. 5	45
12. 1. 145	18
15. 7. 13	18
16. 5. 9	21
16. 5. 52	25
16. 1. 2	45, 265
16. 1. 4	45
16. 2. 23	59
16. 5. 6	45
16. 5. 9	45
16. 5. 35	59

16. 5. 44	265, 292
16. 5. 46	265, 292
16. 5. 60	45
16. 5. 63	296
16. 8. 19	292
16. 10. 17	18
16. 10. 17–20	296

Cyprianus*Ad Fortunatum (ad Fort.)*

7	161
---	-----

De bono patientiae (b. pat.)

12	161
----	-----

De catholicae ecclesiae unitate (unit. eccl.)

23	229
----	-----

De dominica oratione (dom. orat.)

9	128
---	-----

19	161
----	-----

De habitu virginum (hab. virg.)

7	161
---	-----

De lapsis (laps.)

8	99, 161
---	---------

De mortalitate (mort.)

4	217
---	-----

26	161
----	-----

Epistulae (ep.)

13. 5	161
-------	-----

31. 1	229
-------	-----

41. 2	229
-------	-----

42	229
----	-----

43. 7	229
-------	-----

45	23
----	----

48	23
----	----

49	23
----	----

56. 4	23
-------	----

59. 10	23
--------	----

66. 8	99
-------	----

68. 3	144
-------	-----

69–70	99
-------	----

Cyprianus (Ps.-)*De aleatoribus (aleat.)*

9	161
---	-----

Cyril of Jerusalem*Catecheses (cat.)*

1. 5f.	98
--------	----

4–18	104
------	-----

Didache

1–6	273
-----	-----

Egeria*Itinerarium*

46. 1	98
-------	----

Epistula ad Diognetum (ep. Diogn.)

1. 1	94
------	----

6. 3	94
------	----

*Epistula Vitalis et Tonantii (ep. Vit. et**Tonant.)*

62

Eusebius of Caesarea*Historia ecclesiastica (h. e.)*

8. 6. 10	24
----------	----

10. 6. 1–5	26
------------	----

10. 7. 1–2	25
------------	----

Expositio totius mundi et gentium (expos.)

61	15, 17
----	--------

Ferrandus (Ps.-)*Vita Fulgentii (v. Fulg.)*

1	64
---	----

1. 4	39, 54, 55
------	------------

6f.	55
-----	----

7. 22	51
-------	----

Fastidiosus Arianus*Sermo 'Dicimus, prudentissimi fratres' (sermo)*

2	46
---	----

Fulgentius*Contra sermonem Fastidiosi (c. s. Fastid.)*

1	46
---	----

*De remissione peccatorum ad Euthymium**(rem.)*

1. 17. 1	296
----------	-----

*Dicta regis Trasamundi et contra ea respon-**sionum liber (dict. reg. Tras.)*

l. 657	46
--------	----

Fulgentius (Ps.-)*Sermones (serm.)*

46	44
----	----

Testimonia de fide Catholica seu Adversus Pintam (test.)

2 46

Gaudentius Brixienensis

Tractatus (tr.)

19. 20 286

Gennadius

De viris illustribus (vir. ill.)

73 266

79 72

93 266

94 266

Gregory of Elvira

De diversis generibus leprarum (lepr.)

299

Gregory the Great

Registrum epistularum (ep.)

6. 62 25

Gregory of Tours

Historiae Francorum (hist.)

2. 9 34

Herodianus

6. 6. 1 16

Hieronymus

Epistulae (ep.)

60. 16 33

Hippolytus

De antichristo (antichr.)

59 143

In Danielelem (in Dan.)

16 211

Horatius

Satirae (S.)

2. 3. 87 14

Hydatius

Chronicon (chron.)

200. 28 34

267. 15 33

297. 17 33

299. 24

34

301. 1

34

301. 4

34, 49

302. 5

35

304. 15

38, 51

305. 16

40

Isidor

Historia de regibus Gothorum, Wandalorum et Suevorum (hist.)

75

39

Jerusalem Talmud

Pesachim 60b

169

John of Biclarum

Chronicon (chron.)

580. 2

46

John Chrysostom

In Acta Apostolorum homiliae (hom. Act)

3. 4

202

In Matthaeum homiliae (hom. Mt)

86. 4

202

Homiliae baptismales (bapt. hom.)

2. 12

98

Jordanes

Getica (Get.)

30

34

33

34

Justin the Martyr

Apologia (apol.)

1. 55. 3

143

1. 61. 2

94

Lactantius

Divinae institutiones (div. inst.)

4. 18ff.

208

4. 18–19

208

6. 15. 11

208

6. 20. 5

208

Leo the Great

Epistulae (ep.)

7–8

69

12. 8

37

12. 11

37

Sermones (serm.)

16. 5 53

Livius

2. 8. 1–2 185

Marcellinus*Comitis chronicon (com. chron.)*

408 29

Martianus Capella*De nuptiis*

6. 669 18

Maxim of Turin*Sermones (s.)*

28. 1 202

Notkerus the Stammerer*De interpretibus divinarum scripturarum*

9 67

Optatus of Mileve*Contra Parmenianum donatistam (c. Parm.)*

5. 1 100

De schismate donatistarum (schism. Don.)

1. 19 24

3. 3 25

3. 12 25

7. 6 25

app. 1 25

app. 4 25

Sermo in natali s. Innocentium

12 161

Oracula Sybillina (or. Syb.)

8. 217 ff. 208

8. 287 ff. 208

Origen*Contra Celsum (cc)*

3. 9 94

3. 51 95

6. 15 188

Homiliae in Exodum (HEx)

8. 4 238

Homiliae in Leviticum (HLv)

8. 5–11 275

10. 2 96

Orosius*Historia adversus paganos*

1. prol. 68

6. 43 35

7. 42. 1 33

Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis (Pass. Perp. Fel.)

2 95

10 107

Peter Chrysologus*Sermones (s.)*

60. 4 270

62. 9 270

Philostorgius*Historia ecclesiastica (h. e.)*

2. 5 45

Plato*Leges (leg.)*

803 143

Pontius*Vita Cypriani (v. Cypr.)*

19. 1 23

Plinius*Epistulae (ep.)*

10. 96 94

Naturalis historia (nat.)

4. 99 32

Possidius*Vita Augustini (v. Aug.)*

5 75, 229n

5. 1 191

7. 3 76

16 59

16. 1–2 59

27. 7 48

28. 4 36

28. 4–30. 51 47

28. 5 37, 41

28. 6 47

28. 7 11

28. 10 47

28. 11 11

Vita Augustini (v. Aug.) (cont.)

28. 13	47
29–31	36
30	48
30. 3	62
30. 12	48
30. 19	48
31. 9	2

Procopius of Caesarea*De bellis*

3. 2. 1	28
3. 2. 5	43
3. 3. 1	32
3. 3. 15–23	35
3. 3. 22–27	35
3. 3. 31	37
3. 3. 31–35	36
3. 3. 35f.	36
3. 4. 13	38
3. 4. 36–3. 5. 6	40
3. 5. 8	17
3. 5. 11–15	39
3. 5. 18–20	36
3. 15. 9	17
4. 6. 9	39

Prosper of Aquitania*Chronicon* (chron.)

2. 744	36–37
2. 746	38
2. 747	55
748	39
1230	33
1232	33
a. 435	213
a. 437	213

Epitome chronicon (epit.)

1295	35
1321	38
1327	47, 55

Quodvultdeus*Adversus quinquae haereses* (AQH)

1. 1	82
1. 6	82
1. 7–11	82
1. 9	278
1. 10	281

2. 1	82
3. 1–21	82
3. 11	281
4. 1–42	83
4. 12–13	281
4. 18	281
4. 24	281
4. 31	277
4. 36	293
4. 40	281
5. 1	277
5. 2	83
5. 3–6	277
5. 3–15	83
5. 7–9	277
5. 11–14	278
6. 1–78	83
6. 2–5	64
6. 3–5	42, 84
6. 4	170
6. 7	166
6. 7–8	83, 85
6. 9	83, 278, 281
6. 14–15	83
6. 37	281
6. 41	83
6. 67	281
6. 71	281
7. 1	281
7. 1–51	83
7. 4	83, 281
7. 11–12	298
7. 13	281
7. 27	298
7. 33	281
7. 36–37	281
7. 37	289
7. 38	290
7. 39	258
7. 39–43	52
7. 42	157
7. 43	257
7. 47–49	281
7. 49	282
8. 2–4	84

Contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arrianos (CIPA)

1	239, 255
1. 1	201
1. 2	170, 201–202

1. 3	236–237	8. 1–3	287
1. 3–11	203	9. 2	206
1. 4	156, 169, 234–235, 237	9. 3	205
1. 4–5	154	9. 9	206
1. 5	237	10. 3–11	291
1. 7	237	10. 4	178, 292
1. 8	159	10. 7	289
1. 8–9	238	10. 7–8	291
1. 10	262	10. 12	261
1. 10–11	239	11–18. 14	208
1. 11	160–161, 164, 166, 203	11. 1	292–293
2. 1	161, 170, 204	11. 2–4	292
2. 1–2	164	11. 4	295
2. 1–3. 1	241	11. 6–13. 10	295
2. 2	204, 262	12. 1	261
2. 3	263	13. 10	73, 208
2. 4	204	14. 7	228
2. 4–6	263	14. 10	292
2. 5–6	204	15. 3–16. 6	295
2. 6	164	15. 4	73, 207
2. 12	249	15. 8	291
3. 1	159–161, 205, 262	16	73
3. 1–2	205	16. 1	295
3. 4	262	16. 2	261
3. 7–8	205	16. 3	208
3. 8	160–161, 262	16. 3–4	298
4. 1	205	16. 6	208
4. 5	263	17. 1	291
4. 8	264, 298	17. 2ff.	291
4. 10	235	17. 8–10	292
5. 1	205	18. 1	295
5. 1–2	206	18. 1–7	167
5. 4	282	18. 3	294
5. 5	269, 286	18. 7–8	296
5. 5–8	285	18. 10	261, 291
5. 6	268	18. 14	293
5. 6–7	288	19. 2	268
5. 6–8	295	19. 2–7	208
6. 1	277	19. 3	206, 268
6. 3	277	19. 4	289–290
6. 5–8. 5	208	19. 5	206
6–8	206	19. 5–6	288
7. 1	282	19. 6	157, 290
7. 1–4	285	19. 7	268, 282, 289
7. 3	267	20. 1	53, 206, 224, 228
7. 5	289	20. 3–4	206
7. 7	287	21. 1	170
8. 1	285	21. 1ff.	273
		21. 1–3	207, 273

Contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arrianos (CIPA)

(cont.)

21. 4–5	207
22. 1	206
22. 1–3	229, 258
22. 2	229, 272
22. 3	226
22. 3–4	257
22. 3–14	208
22. 4	228
22. 4–5	229
22. 4–6	257
22. 5	269
22. 6–9	207
22. 9	269
22. 12–13	257
22. 14	226

De accedentibus ad gratiam I (A1)

1. 1	170
1. 1–3	186
1. 4	224
1. 4–5	188
1. 6	188, 259
1. 6–8	189
1. 6–9	135–136, 150
1. 6–10	236
1. 8	135, 188, 259, 264
1. 8–10	189
1. 10	155, 187, 234
1. 10–3. 9	255
2. 1	155, 186, 259, 264
2. 1–4	190
2. 1–5	187
2. 2	152, 155, 158
2. 3	150, 156, 165
2. 4	159, 236, 258
2. 5	136, 159–160, 170, 186
2. 6–3. 1	190
2. 7	258
3. 1	160, 229, 258
3. 2	162, 263–264
3. 3	162
3. 4	214
4. 1–5. 6	191
4. 6	192
4. 11–13	192
4. 13	160–161, 262
5. 3	191–192
5. 4	162, 264

6. 1–10	192
6. 4	228
6. 6	161
6. 8–10	263
6. 9–11	198
6. 10	193
7. 7–9	193
7. 9	161
8. 1	193, 299
8. 11–12	300
8. 12	299
8. 13	225, 268
9. 1–2	274, 299
9. 2	232
9. 2–3	274
9. 3	298
9. 12	297
9. 13–14	295
10. 1–13	281
10. 2	194, 258
10. 2–4	276
10. 5–6	277
10. 6	291–292
10. 7	258
10. 7–10	281
10. 9	194, 281
11. 1	224, 228, 261
11. 2	194
11. 3	281
11. 4	281
11. 5	281–282
11. 6	194
11. 6–7	282
12. 1	194, 258, 283
12. 1–2	287
12. 3–12	285
12. 5	287
12. 8	287
12. 15–14. 12	194
13. 1	268, 282
14. 5	269, 287
15. 7	285
16. 2	195
16. 3	226, 229
16. 5	228–229
16. 8–17. 1	194
18. 1	232
18. 1–10	194
19. 1	293

19. 4–7	233	1. 6–8	148
19. 6–7	195	1. 7–11	141
19. 8	195	1. 13	141
<i>De accedentibus ad gratiam</i> II (A2)		1. 14	141
1. 1	170	1. 18–21	141
1. 1–2	195	1. 22	136, 141
1. 3	170, 225	2. 1	142
1–3	186	2. 4–8	142, 217
2. 1	186, 195	2. 9	145
2. 3–5	196	2. 9–11	145
2. 5	197	2. 13	144
2. 9	196	2. 14–23	145
3. 1	196	2. 15	138, 170
3. 6	196	2. 18–19	145
3. 7–9	197	2. 24	145
4. 1–2	197	3. 1–2	145
4. 3	235, 259, 293	3. 2–5	145
5. 4	233	3. 5	145
6. 1	197–198	3. 6	146–147
6. 7	198	3. 6–4. 8	139
6. 9	293	4. 1	146
6. 12	264	4. 1–8	146
7. 3	198	4. 3–4	146
7. 7–15	198	4. 6–7	146
8. 1	198, 228	4. 9	139
8. 3	199, 233	4. 9–11	146
8. 4–9. 9	199	4. 12–13	147
8. 5	228	5. 3–4	147
8. 7	235, 291–292, 295	5. 9	275
9. 1	212	6–7	147
9. 4	235, 293	6. 1	147
9. 7–8	293	6. 1–7	277
9. 8	228	6. 2–5	278
10. 1	228	6. 3	292–293
10–11	198, 259	6. 4	147–148, 224, 228
11. 2	266	6. 6	278
12. 1–4	199	6. 8	269
12. 2	225, 258, 269	6. 9–10	276
12. 4	226	7. 1	147, 287
12. 6	200, 289	7. 3	282, 285
13. 2	228, 258	7. 9–11	287
13. 5	228, 282	7. 10	285
13. 6	200, 224	7. 11	286
13. 11	200	7. 13	286
13. 13	200	7. 14	286
<i>De cantico novo</i> (CN)		7. 17	287
1. 1	137	7. 33	282
1. 2–4	140	8. 2	148, 280
1. 5–6	140	8. 3	280

De cantico novo (CN) (cont.)

8. 4–7	280
8. 8	259, 280
9. 1	266
9. 1–3	148
9. 2–3	258
10. 1	148, 225–226, 228, 260, 267
10. 2–3	149
10. 3–6	148
10. 6–7	149
10. 8	149, 269
10. 9–11	149, 170, 186, 215
10. 11	138

De cataclysmo (C)

1. 1	216, 218
1. 1–3	236
1. 2	216, 232, 234, 263
1. 4	212
1. 4–6	217
1. 6	145
1. 7	217–218
1. 8–10	218
2. 3	212
2. 4	264
2. 4–8	217
2. 5–7	218
2. 7	162, 264
3. 1–2	240
3. 1–9	218
3. 3	234, 240
3. 4	235, 240
3. 4–8	240
3. 9	240
3. 10	234, 241
3. 10–4. 15	218
3. 11–20	241
3. 16	241
3. 20–21	241
3. 22	241
3. 22–23	246
3. 22–24	263
3. 23–24	242
3. 24	242
4. 1	233, 241–242
4. 1–15	243
4. 2	243
4. 3	243
4. 4	243

4. 5	212, 244
4. 5–6	244
4. 9	227
4. 10	234
4. 10–11	244
4. 11–12	245
4. 13	245
5. 1–2	246
5. 1–37	218
5. 2	246, 268, 271
5. 2–9	246
5. 7	279
5. 9	280
5. 10	217
5. 10–11	246
5. 11–14	286
5. 11–37	247
5. 17–20	286
5. 21–23	286
5. 21–27	246
5. 27	269
5. 25–26	286
5. 30–37	246
5. 31	286
5. 36	157
6. 1–4	218, 247
6. 2	269
6. 4–7	247
6. 7–12	218
6. 9	247
6. 12–16	247
6. 13–16	219
6. 17	216–217, 219
6. 18	219
6. 19	298
6. 20–24	216
6. 22	229
6. 25	219
6. 26	219

De quattuor virtutibus caritatis (QVC)

1. 1	80, 170
1. 7	58, 79
2. 2	79, 170
2. 7	170
4	87
4. 4–6	81
5. 1	81
6. 1–8. 5	81
6. 6	233

7. 7	233	3. 10	287
8. 1	160, 162, 262	3. 15	286
9. 3–4	81	3. 21–22	286
11. 1–7	82	4. 2	286
11. 2	170	4. 11–12	288
14. 1	82	4. 12	166
14. 10	81	4. 15	269
<i>De symbolo</i> I (S1)		4. 16	287
1. 1	154–155, 166, 168, 234–235, 255	4. 18	269
1. 2	138, 170, 215, 224	4. 23	288
1. 3	108, 135, 171, 225–226	4. 31–32	288
1. 4	169, 235	4. 32	269, 288
1. 4–10	171	4. 34	266, 298
1. 5	158, 166, 171, 259	5. 2	269
1. 5–6	152, 169, 255	5. 5	229, 269
1. 7	153	5. 11	178
1. 8	156	5. 13	291
1. 9	153, 157, 165–166, 169, 234, 255, 271	5. 20	229
1. 9–11	262	6. 2	294
1. 9–13	172	6. 4	226–227
1. 10–19	255	6. 5	227, 234
1. 11	155, 160, 259, 262	6. 7	291–292
1. 12	172	6. 7–8	294
1. 13	155, 166, 234	6. 8	249
1. 15	263	6. 9	227, 291
1. 15–16	263	6. 9–11	294
1. 16	172	6. 10	233
1. 16 f.	166	6. 10–11	227
1. 19	162, 255, 264	6. 12	226
2	257	6. 16	299
2–3	155	6. 17	235, 299
2. 1	172, 264	6. 17–18	233
2. 2	225, 264	6. 25	235
2. 3	172	6. 27	235
2. 4	264	7. 7	235
2. 5–8	163, 172, 255	8. 1	292
2. 10	298	9. 2	157
2. 12–13	163	9. 6	287
2. 13	229, 298	9. 7	287
2. 14–16	298	9. 6–29	172
2. 18–21	163	9. 9	268–269
2. 19–22	234	9. 15	287
2. 24–25	163	9. 18	282, 287
2. 27	163	9. 25–26	287
2. 27–28	172	9. 30	166
2. 28	164	10. 1	288
3. 9	172	10. 5	291
		10. 13	262
		12. 1	166

De symbolo I (s1) (cont.)

12. 11	227, 229
12. 16	225
13. 1	226, 234, 272
13. 1-3	174
13. 2	224
13. 4	269, 282
13. 4-6	173
13. 6	52, 157, 258, 268, 289-290
13. 9	294, 296
13. 9-11	284, 289
13. 11-13	267, 299

De symbolo II (s2)

1-2	141
1. 1	155, 165-166, 175, 234, 271-272
1. 2	178, 224, 236
1. 2-3	255
1. 3	155, 160, 262
1. 4	161, 177, 262, 264
1. 5	162
2. 1	158, 164, 255, 264, 298
2. 3	263, 266
2. 3-4	263
2. 5	266, 269, 297-298
2. 6	264
2. 8-9	298
2. 13-17	297
2. 13-22	177, 298
3. 1	178
3. 2	298
3. 1-4	177
3. 3-4	297-298
3. 3-6	177
3. 5	286, 298
4. 2	295
4. 3-4	295
4. 5	178, 292
4. 11	178
4. 12	257
4. 13	179
4. 15	179
4. 23 f.	179
4. 27	229
4. 28	226
5. 3	293
5. 4	292

5. 11	292
5. 19	299
9. 1-13	179
9. 4	170
9. 6	234
9. 12	170, 180, 285
9. 17	288
12. 6	180
12. 7	226, 234
12. 7-8	226
12. 9	299
12. 10	180, 224-225, 262
13. 6	273
13. 9	273

De symbolo III (s3)

1. 1	135, 150, 155, 181, 224- 225
1. 1-2	226
1. 3	137-138, 155, 157-159, 182, 234
1. 4	155, 165-166, 182, 225, 229, 262, 271
1. 5	262
1. 6	229, 262
1. 7	166, 182
1. 7-8	164, 273
1. 9	158
1. 10	164
1. 11	155, 182, 263
1. 12	264
1. 13	162, 182, 264
1. 13-14	162, 183
1. 14-16	273
1. 18	162
1. 19	183
1. 21	161, 262
2-3	183
2. 1	184, 273
2. 1 ff.	141
2. 1-2	183
2. 4	183
2. 6	232
2. 7	183
2. 15	184
2. 22	184
3. 9	170
3. 11	269, 297
3. 12	232
3. 13-14	233

4	184	5-6	87
4. 1	165	5. 1	87
4. 7	229	5. 2	85
4. 10	178	7. 7	202
4. 12	291, 294, 296	7. 32	87
4. 16-19	181	8. 1-6	87
4. 19	269	8. 3	299
4. 20	228	8. 7	54, 257
4. 22	229	8. 8	289
5. 2-5	264	8. 8-9	87
5. 5	263	8. 12	290
5. 9	164	8. 13	218
5. 10	235	<i>De tempore barbarico II (TB2)</i>	
5. 11	259	1. 1-3	88
5. 12	163, 235	1. 2	38
5. 16	292	1. 7	38
7. 4	197	1. 7	38, 88
8. 4	293	2. 2	88
9. 2	286-287	2. 6	162, 264
9. 7	236	2. 8-9	88
9. 8	287	3. 1-4. 5	88
9. 9	269, 282	3. 2	296
9. 10	269	4. 7	88
9. 10-11	260	5. 1	88
9. 11	269	5. 3	88
12. 1	166	5. 4	14
12. 10	224	5. 4-6	89
13. 1	225-226, 234, 262	5. 7-12	89
13. 1-2	257	5. 11	41
13. 2	226-228, 261	5. 13	38, 44
13. 4	157, 185, 227, 257, 269	6. 1	89
13. 4-5	185	6. 2	234
13. 5	184, 229, 272, 282,	6. 6	89
	290	7. 4-8	89
13. 7	185, 224, 228	9. 3	89
<i>De tempore barbarico I (TB1)</i>		10-11	89
1. 1	18, 85	13. 1-11	89
1. 11	86, 162, 264	13. 8	233
1. 17-19	86	14. 1-11	89
2. 1	86	14. 4	290
2. 8	86	14. 11	290
3. 1	87	<i>De ultima quarta feria (UQF)</i>	
3. 3	279	1. 1	214
3. 6	87	1. 3-4	248
3. 7	87	1. 4	213-214, 260
3. 19	162, 264	1. 5-10	214, 248
3. 21	87	1. 6	214
4. 12	296	1. 7	202, 214
4. 13-14	87	1. 10	214

De ultima quarta feria (UQF) (cont.)

2. 1	202
2. 1–4	215, 248
2. 2	254
2. 5	248
2. 8	248
2. 11	202, 214
2. 11–12	248
2. 12	135, 214
3–6	215
3. 1	249
3. 2	294
3. 2–4	249
3. 5	249
3. 7	249, 294
3. 8	249
3. 16	249
3. 17	249, 294
3. 22–23	250
4. 1	250
4. 2	249
4. 2–8	250
5. 1	250
5. 2	227, 234, 251
5. 4	228
5. 5–6	227
5. 5–10	252
5. 9	235, 259
5. 11–21	252
5. 13	227
5. 16	253
5. 22	227
5. 24	258
5. 25–26	253
6. 2	269, 276, 280, 282
6. 3	258, 300
6. 4	289
6. 6–7	253
6. 9	253
6. 10–14	215, 254
6. 18	287
6. 18–21	289
6. 20	287
6. 21	282
6. 22	212
6. 24	289–290
6. 25	235, 259, 282
6. 29–7. 1	260
7. 1	235

7. 2–4	215, 254
7. 3	226
7. 4	224, 230
7. 5	215
7. 5–7	215
7. 6	212, 250

Epistolae (ep. apud Augustinum)

221	57, 62, 70, 72
221. 2	289
221. 2–3	72
221. 3	61, 72
223	57, 61–62, 70–72
223. 2	61, 72

Liber promissionum et praedictorum dei (L)

prol.	68, 77
prol. 2	72
1. 1. 3	157
1. 2. 4	77
1. 7. 11	77
1. 7. 13	77
1. 12. 18	77
1. 12. 19	265
1. 14. 21	234
1. 16. 23	146
1. 20. 27–21. 28	234
1. 21	72
1. 25. 34	289
1. 28	72
1. 36. 50	290
1. 36. 52	160, 262
1. 37. 53	245
1. 39. 56	233
2. 5. 8	159
2. 6. 10	69, 265, 275, 278
2. 6. 11	79, 279, 299
2. 7. 12	72
2. 11. 92	79
2. 15. 29	224, 226
2. 18. 33	278
2. 19. 35	289–290
2. 21. 40	234
2. 22. 47	73
2. 25. 54	291
2. 27. 57	224–225, 289–290
2. 30. 65	157
2. 31. 67	157
2. 31. 69	289
2. 34. 72	65
2. 34. 74	79

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------|--|-----|
| 2. 34. 76 | 54, 285 | 20. 1–4 | 98 |
| 2. 35. 77 | 163 | 20. 2 | 155 |
| 2. 35. 79 | 79, 291 | 20. 3–4 | 156 |
| 2. 38. 41 | 278 | 20. 5, 7–9 | 98 |
| 3. 5. 18 | 73 | 20. 7 | 98 |
| 3. 32. 33 | 224 | 21. 1–37 | 98 |
| 3. 34. 44 | 68 | 21. 9–12 | 238 |
| 3. 38. 41 | 69, 74, 296 | | |
| 3. 38. 43 | 69 | Tacitus | |
| 3. 38. 44 | 27, 57, 68, 73–74 | 15. 44 | 94 |
| 3. 38. 45 | 57, 296 | | |
| D. 5. 7 | 267 | Theodore of Mopsuestia | |
| D. 6. 9f. | 63, 68 | <i>Catecheses (cat.)</i> | |
| D. 6. 10 | 69 | 1–10 | 104 |
| D. 6. 12 | 69, 74, 276, 280 | | |
| D. 6. 85 | 65 | Theodoretus of Cyrrhus | |
| D. 7. 14 | 267 | <i>Epistulae (ep.)</i> | |
| D. 8. 15 | 290 | 52 | 55 |
| D. 8. 16 | 157 | 53 | 55 |
| D. 13. 22 | 79, 246, 283, 285 | | |
| D. 14. 23 | 53, 290 | Tertullianus | |
| G. 13. 15 | 78 | <i>Ad Scapulam (Scap.)</i> | |
| G. 13. 16 | 163 | 2. 10 | 22 |
| | | 3. 1 | 22 |
| | | 5. 2 | 22 |
| Registri ecclesiae Carthaginiensis (reg. eccl. Carth.) | | <i>Adversus Iudaeos (adv. Iud.)</i> | |
| can. 61 | 27 | 1. 1f. | 21 |
| | | <i>Adversus Marcionem (adv. Marc.)</i> | |
| Rufinus | | 6. 1 | 166 |
| <i>Expositio symboli (symb.)</i> | | <i>Apologeticum (apol.)</i> | |
| 2 | 166 | 18. 4 | 94 |
| 4 | 172 | <i>De anima (an.)</i> | |
| 37 | 270 | 35. 2 | 160 |
| 39 | 270 | 52. 4 | 143 |
| | | <i>De baptismo (bapt.)</i> | |
| Salvianus | | 8. 4 | 143 |
| <i>De gubernatione Dei (gub.)</i> | | 17. 1–5 | 80 |
| 7. 11 | 49 | 18 | 94 |
| 7. 11. 45 | 49 | 19. 1 | 211 |
| 7. 13–17 | 33 | 20 | 95 |
| 7. 16 | 16 | 20. 5 | 225 |
| 7.16. 68 | 39 | <i>De corona (cor.)</i> | |
| | | 3. 2 | 160 |
| Traditio apostolica (TA) | | 13. 7 | 120 |
| 15–16 | 97 | <i>De idolatria (idol.)</i> | |
| 17. 1 | 97 | 3–17 | 120 |
| 17. 2 | 97 | 5. 1 | 120 |
| 18. 1 | 97 | <i>De spectaculis (spect.)</i> | |
| 19. 1 | 97 | 4. 1 | 119 |

De spectaculis (spect.) (cont.)

4. 1–3	160
8. 9	119
29. 5	163

Victor of Tunnuna

<i>Chronica a. CCCCXLIV–DLXVII (chron.)</i>	65
---	----

Victor of Vita*Historia persecutionis*

1. 1	40
1. 2	36
1. 3	37
1. 4	37
1. 5	55
1. 5–6	37
1. 7–8	37
1. 8	43
1. 9	37, 51–52, 54
1. 10	36–37, 47
1. 12	39
1. 13	39–40
1. 14–18	51
1. 15	54, 64
1. 15–16	39
1. 16	17, 54
1. 17–18	51

1. 19–21	52
1. 21	290
1. 22	52
1. 24	52, 65
1. 24–27	209, 307
1. 29	52
1. 33	290
1. 43	52, 289
2	209
2. 1	53
2. 4	43, 50
2. 9	52, 55
2. 39	34, 46, 52
2. 55	43
3	209
3. 4	52, 55
3. 5	50
3. 15–16	17
3. 33	52
3. 34	26
3. 45	290
3. 48	290

Zosimus*Historia nova*

1. 48	32
2. 12	16

Index of Names and Places

- Abaritana 39, 57–58
 Abba 20
 Abel 250, 254
 Abraham 77, 81, 162, 233, 243, 295
 Adam 87, 100, 141, 164, 197, 227n30, 280, 306
 Adeodatus 58, 102–103, 105
 Ado 66
 Adrianople 283
 Aesculapius 19
 Aetius 37, 40
 Afri 13
 Africa Proconsularis 13–14, 16, 21, 38–39, 52, 84
 Africa, Roman 13–19, 56–57, 93, 260
 Agrippinus 23
 Alaric 30, 34, 40
 Alexandria 16, 94
 Algeria 14
 Alypius 18, 103, 105, 203n290
 Ambrose of Milan 29, 47–48, 102–105, 110, 117n155, 124n213, 126, 136, 144, 165–166, 168–169, 172, 183–188, 191, 197n254, 208–209, 228, 240, 251, 266, 270–271, 283, 297
 Ana 35
 Andalusia, *see* *Baetica*
 Anthony the Egyptian 103
 Antioch 118
 Apollodorus 18
 Apuleius 15
 Aquileia 44, 266
 Aquincum 32
 Ardaburius 29
 Ariminum 44–45, 50, 287
 Arius 44–46, 286
 Arles 25
 Asclepius 266
 Aspar 29, 36, 69
 Astingi 32
 Attila 36
 Attis 20
 Augustine of Hippo 2, 7, 11–12, 25n, 30n, 36, 44, 47–49, 58–62, 70–73, 75n, 77, 79, 81, 85, 88, 90, 93n, 100–130, 133–136, 138–139, 141–146, 149, 151, 153–154, 157–159, 161–162, 166, 168, 170–172, 174, 176–177, 188–192, 194, 202, 208–211, 214, 223, 225–226, 229, 234, 240–241, 246, 251, 258–260, 266–267, 270–271, 275–278, 280, 282, 285, 287, 291, 295, 297, 303, 305–307
 Aurelius 18, 25, 58, 60, 62, 68, 100, 114n138, 180
 Ausonius 16
 Avaritana, *see* *Abaritana*
 Azov, *see* *Maeotic Lake*
 Ba'al Hammon 19
 Baetica 33–34
 Bagrada 13
 Balearic Islands 34
 Balkans 33
 Basilica Restituta 39, 54, 64
 Belisarius 42n210, 56
 Bethlehem 179, 181, 291
 Bithynia 94
 Bonifatius 31, 34–36, 52
 Braga 281n196
 Britain 33
 Budapest 32
 Burgodioni 32
 Byrsa 20
 Byzacena 14, 38–39, 57
 Byzantium 56, 307
 Caecilianus 24–25
 Caelestis 19, 27, 57, 68, 71n81, 73
 Caesaria 14
 Cain 213, 249–250
 Campania 39, 64–65, 68–69, 71–73, 77, 275
 Capodimonte 66
 Capreolus 41, 62–63, 70–71, 74, 80, 170, 201
 Carthage 7, 13–14, 16–27, 38–43, 56–65, 69–71, 90, 102, 143, 149, 151, 158, 163, 186, 201, 209–210, 254, 259, 264, 268, 271, 275, 279–280, 291, 292n293, 296–297, 306–307
 Casae Nigrae 25
 Cassiciacum 103
 Cassiodorus 35–36, 67
 Castinus 49

- Cato, Marcus Porcius 13
 Celsus 94–95
 Cerealis of *Castellum Ripense* 266
 Chalcedon 69
 Charini 32
 Chercell, *see Caesaria*
 Cicero, M. Tullius 89, 143
 Cirta 14
 Constantine I 1, 16n26, 20, 25–26
 Constantine II 17
 Constantine III 33
 Constantine (city), *see Cirta*
 Constantinople 16, 45, 118, 265–266
 Cornelius Clemens 32
 Corsica 40
 Cybele 20
 Cyprian 11, 23–24, 55n293, 99–100, 124,
 128n244, 144, 149, 161n56, 225n10, 228–
 229, 246, 250–251, 267
 Cyrenae 13
 Cyrila 43
 Cyril of Jerusalem 104, 126, 183

 Dacia 32
 Daniel 51, 78–79, 295
 Danube 32
 David 82, 89, 187, 195–199, 233, 245, 293
 Decius 23, 98–99
 Deogratias 52, 54, 58, 65, 75, 106, 209, 307
 Dio Cassius 32
 Diocletian 14, 20–21, 24, 59n16, 99
 Domitius Alexander 16
 Donatus 1, 25

 Edessa 55, 118
 Egypt 13, 19, 21, 81, 96n17, 213, 240–247, 246,
 263, 280n185
 Elijah 163
 Emerita 35
 Emmaus 199, 293
 Ephesus 41, 62, 74
 Epiphanius 61
 Esau 163, 234
 Eshmun 19
 Eugenius of Carthage 209, 266
 Eulalia 35
 Eutropius 69
 Eutyches 69
 Eve 227n30, 229n49

 Evodius of Uzala 60
 Ezekiel 283

 Felicitas 85, 87, 95
 Florus the Pelagian 65
 Florus of Lyon 66
 Franks 34
 Frigidus 266
 Fulgentius of Ruspe 266, 275n154, 296

 Gaetulia 39
 Gaiseric, *see Geiseric*
 Galicia, *see Gallaecia*
 Gallaecia 33
 Galla Placidia 36
 Gallien 24
 Gammarth 20
 Gaul 33, 49, 118
 Geiseric 34–41, 47, 49–56, 63–65, 70–71,
 84–85, 173, 179, 185, 203, 209, 213, 303,
 306–307
 Genderix, *see Geiseric*
 Gennadius 67, 71–73, 187
 Genseric, *see Geiseric*
 Gibraltar 35
 Goliath 82, 89
 Godigisel 34
 Gog 29, 183
 Goths 29, 32–34, 36, 45
 Greece 19
 Gunderic 34
 Gunthamun 40
 Guntharic, *see Gunderic*
 Gutones 32

 Hadrianopolis 29, 33
 Hanan, *see Hinena*
 Hasdingi 33–34
 Heliodorus of Altinum 33
 Hercules 297n322
 Heremigarius 35
 Hermes Trismegistus 78
 Herod 175, 178–179, 181
 Herodian 16
 Hinena 20
 Hippo Regius 1, 11, 21, 25, 36, 38, 41, 46–47,
 62, 93, 108–109, 118, 121–122, 127, 133,
 139, 149, 151, 154, 210–213, 292, 303–304,
 307

- Hippolytus of Rome 96n19
 Hispalis 34
 Hispania 31, 34–36, 49
 Honoratus 48
 Honorius I 18, 26, 28–29, 33, 280
 Honorius of Thiava 47, 49, 62–63
 Huneric 41, 50, 53–55, 307
 Huns 33, 49n248
 Hydatius 35, 38, 51

 Isaac 81, 233
 Isaiah 83, 90, 214, 252, 254, 295
 Israel 78, 81, 143, 217, 241, 243–245, 293
 Italy 14, 29, 31, 35–36, 38–40, 100, 125n216, 276n156, 280n185

 Jacob 78, 143, 163, 234
 Jerome 33, 79
 Jerusalem 128, 141–142, 144–145, 148, 191
 Joannes 29, 35
 John the Baptist 98, 243
 John the Evangelist 286, 295
 Jordanes 34
 Joseph 298
 Judas 213, 249–250, 284, 294
 Julian of Aeclanum 62, 65, 69, 280
 Julian, the Proconsul 21
 Julian the Emperor 25
 Julius Caesar 16
 Juno Caelestis 19–20, 163, 297–298
 Jupiter 20, 40, 163, 297–298
 Justin 94, 143
 Justinian 52, 56, 307

 Kairouan 56
 Kasserine, *see Scillium*

 Lactantius 208, 246, 298
 Lawrence 30, 250
 Leo the Great 37, 53n279, 67–69, 74n109, 276n156, 280n185, 306
 Leptis Magna 16
 Libya 14, 21

 Maeotic Lake 32
 Magog 29, 283
 Maiorinus 24–25
 Mainz 33

 Makara 13
 Mani 21
 Mansuetus of Urusi 47
 Marcionites 22
 Marcomanni 32–33
 Marcus Aurelius 32
 Marius Victorinus 103, 107
 Mars 297
 Martianus Capella 18
 Martin of Tours 47
 Mary, Virgin 163, 167n114, 171, 187, 194, 196, 199, 204, 206, 227–229, 247, 262, 278, 298
 Mauritania 14, 34–36, 39, 41
 Maxentius 16
 Maximian 25
 Mediterranean Sea 28, 35, 65, 119
 Melania 31
 Merida, *see Emerita*
 Michal 197–198, 259, 293
 Milan 29, 102–103, 105, 110, 117–118, 122, 128, 136, 203
 Miltiades 25
 Minerva 20, 297
 Mithra 20
 Monica 101, 107
 Morocco 14
 Moses 77, 217–218, 233–234, 241–242, 246, 263, 286, 295

 Naples 64–66, 69
 Nero 94
 Nicaea 46, 50, 122
 Noetus of Smyrna 281
 Nostrianus 65, 69, 74n109
 Notker Balbulus 67
 Novatus of Sitifis 47
 Numidia 14, 39, 203

 Octavian 16
 Odoacer 28
 Optatus of Milevis 100, 161n56, 246
 Origen 79, 95, 188, 238
 Orosius 49n248, 79

 Palatine 40
 Palermo, *see Panormus*
 Palestine 1, 20
 Pampinianus of Vita 47

- Panormus 40
 Parmenian 25
 Paulinus 103
 Paul of Tarsus 24, 30, 48, 103, 124, 141, 145,
 177–178, 213–214, 233, 243, 245, 248, 286,
 299
 Perpetua, Vibia 85, 87, 95, 107
 Peter Chrysologus 270
 Peter 30, 144, 149, 178, 196, 198, 213, 233, 240,
 252–253, 265, 298
 Petrus, Henricus 67
 Philastrius of Brescia 61
 Philip 281
 Phrygia 22
 Pilate, Pontius 171, 176, 196
 Pinianus 31
 Placidius 17
 Plato 89, 143
 Pliny the Younger 32, 94
 Possidius of Calama 11, 40–41, 47–49, 59–
 60, 62n32, 75–76, 213
 Praetextatus 265
 Primian 25
 Proconsularis, *see Africa P.*
 Procopius 28, 31–32, 36–37, 42n210
 Prosper of Aquitaine 35n148, 55, 67–69,
 71n81, 213, 305
 Pseudo-Augustine 2, 76
 Pseudo-Hegesippus 79
 Pyrenees 33–34

 Quadi 33
 Quadratus 146

 Raptus 32
 Rausus 32
 Ravenna 35, 270, 283
 Rebecca 163, 234
 Red Sea 81, 217–218, 241, 263
 Revocatus 95
 Rhine 29n106, 33–34
 Rimini, *see Ariminum*
 Rome 1, 13–17, 21, 28–30, 38, 40, 59, 67n58,
 94, 96n19, 102, 116n145, 118, 125n216, 185,
 200, 265, 306–307
 Romulus Augustulus 28
 Rufinus 79, 166, 168, 270
 Rufus Volusianus 16

 Sabellius 281
 Salvian 17n33, 49
 Sardinia 40
 Saturn 19, 297
 Saturninus 95
 Saturninus, Vigellius 21
 Scillium 11, 21
 Scipio, Publius Cornelius 13
 Sebastian 52
 Secundulus 95
 Secundus of Tigisis 24
 Seleucia 50
 Septimius Severus 15–16
 Serapis 20
 Serena 29
 Sicily 40
 Sidon 13
 Sigisvultus 31, 35
 Silesia 32
 Silingi 33
 Sinai 77
 Sirte 36
 Sodom 146
 Stephen 250
 Stilicho 29, 69
 Suebi 32–33, 35
 Sufes 297n322
 Susanna 298
 Sybilla 78
 Symmachus 265

 Tacitus 32, 94
 Tanit 19
 Terence 15
 Tertullian 11, 20–22, 24, 94, 99, 101, 110, 119–
 120, 124, 143–144, 149, 161n57, 163, 166,
 193, 211, 231
 Thagaste 18
 Theoderic 40
 Theodore of Mopsuestia 104, 155
 Theodoretus of Cyrrhus 55
 Theodosius I 21, 26, 29, 45n225
 Theodosius II 17, 29, 39, 265
 Ticonius 79
 Tingitana 36
 Tisza 32
 Tonantius 62
 Trajan 14, 94
 Tripolitana 14, 57

Tunisia 14–15, 56

Tyre 13

Ulfila, *see* Wulfila

Ursus 27, 59–60, 73

Usuard 66

Valens 49

Valentinian II 29, 45ⁿ²²⁵

Valentinian III 31, 35, 38–40, 47ⁿ²³⁶, 52, 65,
68–69

Valerian 23

Valerius 75

Valia 33–35

Varinnae 32

Venus 297

Victor of Vita 36–37, 40–41, 47, 50–51, 53–
55, 64–65

Vigilius of Thapsus 266, 275ⁿ¹⁵⁴

Virgil 73, 78, 207–208, 295

Vitalis 62

Voconius 71–73, 187

Volusianus 30ⁿ¹¹⁴

Worms 33

Wulfila 45, 49

Zeugitana 39, 52

Zosimus 280ⁿ¹⁸⁵

Index of Modern Authors

- Adamiak, S. 279
 Altendorf, E. 225n9
 Ambrasi, D. 66
 Arbesmann, R. 190
 Arce, J. 34n137
 Audet, Th.-A. 118
 Auguet, R. 162
 Ayres, L. 44n224
- Bashuth Mapwar, F. 56
 Barnes, T.D. 17n33, 21–22, 99
 Barnwell, P.S. 4n5, 38
 Baronio, C. 66
 Belche, J.-P. 107n84
 Benko, S. 68n63
 Berrouard, M.-F. 191, 230n56
 Beskow, P. 59n16
 Blumenkranz, B. 85, 292
 Bockmann, R. 56, 284
 Bogaert, P.-M. 3n4, 90
 Boismard, M.-É. 5, 160n56
 Bonner, G. 265
 Bouhot, J.-P. 124
 Boulding, M. 101, 176
 Bradshaw, P. 96–97
 Braun, R. 3n4, 27, 57, 67–68, 72–75, 89, 139, 187, 208, 230
 Brennecke, H.C. 45n225
 Brown, P. 1–2, 31, 101, 107, 119, 128, 285
 Bruggisser, Ph. 3n4
 Burgess, R.W. 33–35, 38, 40, 49, 51
 Busch, B. 106n81, 108
- Cacucci, F. 231
 Cameron, A. 29, 39, 265–266
 Capelle, D.B. 119, 229n49
 Caraffa, D. 66
 Chadwick, H. 88
 Chaker, S. 57
 Ciccarese, M.P. 243n126
 Clay, T. 14n12
 Clover, F.M. 42n211, 264
 Colish, M. 103
 Collombet, F.Z. 41
 Conant, J. 14–16, 36, 40, 42
 Costanza, S. 44
- Courcelle, P. 3n4, 60n21, 208n321
 Courtois, Ch. 15, 32–33, 36–39, 41–42, 48–50, 54–55, 62–63, 276
 Cracco Ruggini, L. 266
 Cromwell, R.S. 38
- Daniélou, J. 143n56
 Dassmann, E. 100, 188, 191, 218
 De Bruyn, Th.S. 30n114
 Decret, F. 4, 14–15, 20–21, 26, 275–276
 Degórski, B. 5
 De Lange, N.R.M. 291
 De Latte, R. 127, 129
 Denzel, M.A. 65n46
 Desanges, J. 57
 De Simone, R.J. 5, 137, 146, 160, 167–168, 203, 212, 287
 Diesner, H.-J. 53
 Dodaro, R. 202
 Dodds, E.R. 119
 Dondeyne, A. 150n3
 Dossey, L. 56n300, 284n219
 Drecoll, V.H. 21n57
 Dudden, F.H. 103
 Dujarier, M. 108, 150n3
 Dunlap, Th. 56
 Duval, Y. 3n4, 16n24, 23, 26, 79
- Ennabli, L. 22, 26–27, 54n283, 58n11
 Eno, R.B. 4n5
 Escribano Paño, M.V. 21n55, 265n67
 Evans, R.F. 225n9
- Faivre, A. 59, 202
 Fasola, U.M. 65–66
 Ferguson, E. 5, 106n81, 122, 127, 129, 150, 238, 290
 Finn, T.M. 5, 46n232, 96, 99, 106n81, 111, 121, 135, 150, 153–154, 159, 168n116, 170, 173, 179, 287, 291–292, 297
 Fishwick, D. 14
 Fournier, É. 51n265, 53n277
 Francesconi, G. 233n70
 Francovich Onesti, N. 50
 Franses, D. 2n4, 52, 62, 67–68, 71, 74–75
 Friend, W.H.C. 15, 22, 24–26, 107, 279n180

- Gambrassi, L. 143
 Gaudemet, J. 265n67
 Gautier, E.F. 35–36, 43, 52
 Gavriljuk, P.L. 100, 106–108
 George, J.W. 17n32, 42
 Gil Egea, M.E. 4n5, 36–38, 40n194, 42
 Goffart, W.A. 3n5, 28, 36n150
 González Salinero, R. 4n5, 26–27, 31,
 35n145, 37–38, 42, 44, 49, 51–52, 54,
 60n21, 62–63, 66–67, 74–75, 80, 84–85,
 257–258, 268, 279n180, 283, 291–292,
 297–298
 Goodenough, E.R. 20n51
 Graf, F. 231
 Green, W.M. 13n2, 16
 Grossi, V. 5, 100, 106n81, 116, 124, 126, 211,
 225n9
 Guignebert, C. 264
 Guy, L. 128
 Gy, P.-M. 230–231

 Hamilton, L.I. 47, 52
 Hamman, A.-G. 15
 Handley, M.A. 56n301
 Hanson, R.P.C. 44n224
 Harkins, F. 272n139
 Harmless, W. 5, 97, 103–104, 106–108, 112–
 114, 116–124, 127–130, 296n317
 Hauler, E. 90
 Heil, U. 45n224, 283n211
 Henrichs, A. 275n152
 Hettinger, A. 51
 Hoover, J.A. 267n86, 283
 Humfress, C. 265
 Hunt, E. 69
 Huß, W. 13–14

 Inglebert, H. 4n5
 Isola, A. 4–5, 26, 37, 48, 54–56, 64, 75, 80,
 83–84, 86, 90, 149, 214, 218, 228n46, 241,
 244–246, 275, 277, 279–281, 289, 291,
 296–297

 Jensen, R.M. 95, 98n33, 118, 120, 127–128,
 225–227
 Johnson, M.E. 96n17
 Jones, A.H.M. 15n18, 28, 36, 39
 Judant, D. 293n298
 Jungmann, J.A. 50

 Jürgens, H. 18n39

 Kalkman, R.G. 3n4
 Kappelmacher, A. 3n4, 71
 Kelly, H.A. 5, 108, 120, 150, 160n56
 Kelly, J.N.D. 122n194, 166–167
 Kirsten, H.-J. 128n237
 Klöckener, M. 108n98
 Koenen, L. 275n152

 La Bonnardière, A.-M. 18n40
 Lambot, C. 3n4, 74n107, 80
 Lamirande, E. 106n81, 111, 139, 261
 Lancel, S. 13n1, 15, 19, 25, 58n11
 Lapeyre, G.G. 52, 54, 62
 Latham, J.E. 108
 Lauras, A. 69n69
 Lawless, G. 191, 202
 Le Bohec, Y. 290n275
 Leisten, Th. 13–14
 Le Nain de Tillemont, L.S. 68n67, 70
 Leglay, M. 19n45, 20n49
 Leone, A. 26n96, 58n11
 Lepelley, C. 14n7, 16, 18, 20, 24, 27
 Lézine, A. 42
 Lichner, M. 81n150, 106n81, 225
 Liebeschuetz, J.H.W.G. 32–33, 36n150, 40,
 42–43, 50, 52–53
 Lienhard, J.T. 122n194
 Linder, A. 290
 Lorenz, R. 286n233
 Louth, A. 93, 101
 Luiselli, B. 45
 Lukyn Williams, A. 85
 Luneau, A. 77n127
 Luttwak, E.N. 28
 Lyman, J.R. 267, 272

 Madec, G. 58n9, 138
 Maier, J.-L. 3n5, 57n4, 59, 266
 Mann, P.M. 150n3
 Mara, M.G. 266
 Marec, E. 127
 Margerie, B. de 110
 Markus, R.A. 25, 31, 35n145, 162n78, 202,
 265, 279n180
 Martroye, F. 39
 Maschio, G. 228n35
 Mathisen, R.W. 45

- Mayer, C. 188–189
 Mazza, E. 230–232
 Mazzolini, S. 99n37
 Mbonigaba, F. 3n4, 167, 201–204
 McEvoy, J. 160n50
 McWilliam Dewart, J. 197
 Merrills, A.H. 31–34, 36, 43, 50, 307n4
 Meessen, Y. 160n50
 Meslin, M. 266
 Miles, R. 50, 307n4
 Milewski, I. 53n279
 Miller, R.W.H. 143
 Modéran, Y. 39n82, 50
 Mohrmann, Ch. 110
 Monachino, V. 108n98
 Morin, G. 2n4, 61n24, 70–71, 75nn16, 90, 168, 211n5, 267
 Morrica, U. 71
 Muhlberger, S. 306
 Munier, Ch. 59n15
 Musoni, A. 225n10
 Müssing, H.-W. 218

 Nazzaro, A.V. 3n4, 69, 74, 79–80, 85, 154, 168, 175, 181, 186, 193, 200, 203, 207, 212–213, 291
 Nock, A.D. 3n4, 19n45, 138n24, 211
 Norman, N. 264n60

 O'Donnell, J.J. 142n49, 176
 Oost, S.I. 35n145

 Parvis, P. 45
 Parvis, S. 46
 Patout Burns, J. 95, 120, 290
 Pavan, M. 283
 Pellegrino, M. 3n4, 191, 230
 Peper, B.M. 225n10, 227–229, 257–258, 264, 267
 Perler, O. 57n4, 59
 Perrin, M.-Y. 258, 270n124, 289
 Picard, G.C. 16–17, 19n45
 Pignot, M. 5, 75–76, 94n10, 100–102, 105, 108–113, 137–140, 150–151, 154, 156, 165–168, 170, 186–187, 201, 203, 212–213, 216, 224–225, 268, 289
 Piranomonte, M. 125n216
 Pizzolato, L.F. 102n57, 248
 Plass, P. 17n31

 Plumpe, J.C. 225n9
 Pohl, W. 15, 32–36, 44
 Poque, S. 106n81, 108, 117, 120–122, 124, 128–129
 Pottier, B. 4n5, 279

 Quasten, J. 118, 155

 Raasted, J. 3n4, 90
 Rakob, F. 19n45
 Rankin, D. 22
 Ratzinger, J. 105n79, 225n9
 Rebillard, É. 111, 113, 130, 265
 Ristow, S. 127
 Rives, J.B. 19–20, 23
 Rodolfi, A. 4n5
 Römer, C. 275n152
 Rondet, H. 138n23
 Rummel, Ph. von 32n120, 43n218
 Ruggini, L. 29, 266

 Sadowski, S. 268
 Sanders, G. 58n8
 Sandwell, I. 93
 Sannazzaro, M. 283
 Satterlee, C.A. 104–105
 Sauser, E. 125
 Saxer, V. 5, 21, 23, 56, 134–135, 137, 146, 155–157, 160, 167, 186, 203, 209, 212
 Schäferdiek, K. 45–46
 Schöffner, A. 229n49
 Schäublin, C. 107n84
 Scheid, J. 13–14
 Schepens, P. 2–3, 62, 68–69, 71, 74
 Schlier, H. 265
 Schmidt, L. 72
 Schmitz, J. 117
 Schwarcz, A. 37
 Scorza Barcellona, F. 4, 278n176
 Senger, B.A. 225n10
 Serra, D.E. 5, 150n3
 Sesboüe, B. 99n37
 Shaw, B.D. 265, 273, 278, 292
 Simonetti, M. 3n4, 72–73, 86n180, 187, 281–283
 Simonis, W. 225n9
 Siniscalco, P. 283
 Smith, J.W. 197
 Solignac A. 177n155

- Spinks, B.D. 96n19
 Stern, K.B. 20n51
 Stewart-Sykes, A. 128
 Strobl, W. 3n4, 62–63, 65, 74n113

 Tammuz, O. 65
 Teske, R. 45n225
 Tilley, M.A. 26n89
 Tranoy A. 49n253

 Valentin, L. 70n77
 Van der Meer, F. 108n98
 Van Egmond, P. 270n124, 274n149
 Van Geest, P. 176n151
 Van Mater Dennis, H. 36–37
 Van Oort, J. 107n84, 275n152
 Van Slyke, D.G. 4–5, 33n133, 36, 41, 52–53, 61n24, 67n55, 74, 78, 134, 150, 157–158, 162–163, 267, 272, 289–290
 Viciano Vives, A. 231
 Ville, G. 17n32
 Visonà, G. 29, 283
 Vogel, C. 218
 Vogt, H.J. 143n56

 Völker, W. 188
 Vopřada, D. 30n114, 76, 102n49, 105, 169, 183, 188, 190, 231, 248, 251–252, 265–266, 270–271
 Vössing, K. 42n211
 Vycichl, W. 13

 Waszink, J.H. 161n57
 Watson, A. 32
 Weidmann, C. 279n176
 Westra, L.H. 122, 167, 274n149
 Whelan, R. 4n5, 43, 45, 49, 55n295, 75n117, 209, 257–258, 265, 267, 273, 279n178, 282, 289
 Whitaker, D. 29
 Willis, G.G. 225n9
 Wilken, R. 291
 Wilmart, A. 90
 Wiśniewski, R. 50, 53
 Wolfram, H. 56

 Zeiller, J. 52
 Zocca, E. 4n5, 47n236, 283